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WORK ABOUT THE FIVE DIALS.

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WORK ABOUT

THE FIVE DIALS.

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By.
(A. Maude Stanley)

"THE HOURS ARE SLOW TO THE AFFLICTED,
SWIFT TO THE JOYOUS."

Mm. 6-46

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1878.

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LONDON:
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR,
BREAD STREET HILL.

TO

MY MOTHER AND TO MANY FRIENDS

FOR THEIR UNWEARYING SYMPATHY AND HELP

IN MY

Work about the Five Dials.

I AM requested to testify that the lady writer of the following pages, though anonymous, is a most authentic person, whom I have known with esteem and affection ever since her childhood, and that I can believe every word of this, her narrative, to be scrupulously true.

T. CARLYLE.

CHELSEA,
12th April, 1878.

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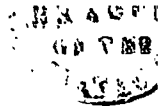

WORK ABOUT THE FIVE DIALS.

CHAPTER I.

VISITING THE POOR.

MANY books have already been written about the poor in London. Some authors have dealt with this subject from the purely religious side, showing that through the Bible-woman, the Scripture-reader, or the missionary, the poor can be reached and civilised by the teaching of Christianity alone. Others have treated the subject entirely from a philanthropic or social point of view. Whilst a third class have tried to show how to deal with the poor by the laws of political economy.

From all these books we can learn much, both as to the condition of the working classes and as to the different ways of helping and improving them. But notwithstanding that many books have been written on the subject, a few more stories and a few more experiences may not come amiss if told as these will be, without any gloss—simple tales of sorrow, of distress, of hope, and of reformation, which can best be dealt with through the personal sympathy of the unpaid visitor to the poor.

Those who wish to undertake this work will find various ways of accomplishing their object. They may become members of the Charity Organisation Society and be employed by it to visit those persons who have applied for relief. They may belong to the Society for the Relief of Distress, and be in communication with the clergyman, the Dissenting minister, the Roman Catholic priest, and various parochial authorities, who will tell them of those who are sick or in distress. They may belong to

Miss Octavia Hill's band of workers, and in some way take up the position of the landlord or his agent, collecting rents, and thus obtain a footing in the dwellings of the working classes. Again, a lady may be associated with the Parochial Mission Women's Society; she may be the "Lady Superintendent" visiting those families pointed out to her by the paid mission-women. But the best of all ways in my opinion of setting to work amongst the poor is that of being a district visitor under the sanction of the clergyman of the parish. An old-fashioned way, no doubt, which for that very reason will be discarded by many. Pauperising! some will say; Sectarian! says another; Inquisitorial! says a third. But experience has taught me that it is by far the best method of really reaching the homes and the hearts of working people.

The parochial system has become so rooted in the minds of Englishmen that the visitor has but to say that he has undertaken to visit in the district, for the clergyman of the parish,

and he will find that that introduction will be considered a sufficient apology for what otherwise might be looked upon as an unwarrantable intrusion. This, however, is only an introduction; it remains for him to show sufficient tact, good sense, and kindliness to be asked to come again. Though the Dissenting bodies, particularly the Baptists, have a great hold over the working people in their services, their Sunday-schools and class-meetings, they visit rarely except in cases of serious illness, and they would never think of calling on any one outside their congregation unless requested to do so. The Roman Catholic priest and Sisters will visit all those of their own faith in their several parishes; but the Protestant feeling is too strong to allow them to look after any other poor person, nor have they the inclination to do so; therefore it remains for the Church of England to send to all alike, without fear of being repulsed for interference by the poor of other denominations. In a well organised parish the visitor will be in communication with all the other agencies that

are already at work for the relief of distress, and he should be able to conduct to their proper channels all available help.

The work of the Charity Organisation Society is limited to those who apply for assistance. The Relief Society aids only those who are pointed out to them. Miss Octavia Hill's visitors go only to the houses under her own or her agent's control, where no relief is allowed to be given. The "Lady Superintendent" calls on those persons to whom she is directed by the mission woman; but the district visitor can visit all indiscriminately; can penetrate into houses where none other could enter; and can bring to the sick and to the sorrowing the temporal and spiritual relief which is always at hand, but which is often unknown to those who most require it. Men and women can alike undertake this duty, though the idea of a district visitor in many minds is connected with the fussy lady distributing at one and the same time tracts and soup-tickets.

I have known several men who have visited

in the homes of the working classes, and their kindness during sickness, or their long-continued friendship, and the interest they have shown in the affairs of the poor, have been spoken of to me with intense gratitude and appreciation. I have been eagerly told of various traits of sympathy, of the constant visits cheering the dying man, or of the efforts to rescue a wandering son or daughter; such services being far more valued than any amount of tickets for soup or coals. An artizan speaking to me one day of a gentleman who had long visited in his street, said, "I shall never forget his kindness to me. Why! he was here with my poor old mother when she received the Sacrament not many days before she died." If a man undertakes to be a district visitor you may be sure he does it because he feels a vocation for the work, and so he will do it well. But many a woman will take up visiting the poor because she finds an idle, listless life becoming a burden, amusement perhaps no longer amuses; or she may expect to find in the homes of the poor a cure

for what is called "a disappointment." Visitors of this class will rarely be of use; you must bring to this work, as to all others, your best faculties and energies; you must know something of the poor-law, of trade, and of the demand for labour; something of education, of hospitals, of the different homes for the destitute and the sinful; and you must be able to point out where work may be got or where sickness may be cured.

The visitor must above all things have tact and sympathy to enter into the feelings of the poor; he must have a ready judgment to inspire those he visits with confidence and hope; and he must have perseverance to follow up a case when he begins it; never tiring, and if he finds that one way fails, he must try over and over again. The experience, it is said, of one person is almost always wasted on others; but yet it may help some who are contemplating work amongst the London poor to know the steps by which another has learned to visit them, and has gained their confidence so as to be

applied to for help and counsel in many varying circumstances of life.

My first introduction to the neighbourhood of the Dials was seven years ago, when I undertook a district consisting of one street and a court, containing in all about thirty houses. They were mostly good houses of three stories, the ground floor consisting of shops whose rental was about £1 a week. The clergyman of the district in which I was to visit said he would introduce me to it. This introduction consisted in pointing out to me three houses, where he told me I should find certain widows, and that from these I must work my way on alone, and become acquainted with more. It might seem to some an insurmountable difficulty to stand in a street and to know that each room represents a family, that the street door must be passed, the inner doors must be separately knocked at, and inside an unknown person must be addressed before the first step has been taken in the work of district-visiting. But these difficulties, though very real, can be

overcome. Various expedients may be used to scrape up an acquaintance, and by degrees the visitor will attain a thorough knowledge of his district.

If he should begin his work totally ignorant of the people, of their names and their condition, which must be the case either in a new-formed parish or in one where organisation has not been complete, he may possibly make their acquaintance through the children at the school; and perhaps he may find this the best way with parents, who are generally most easily approached through some word of praise or appreciation of their child. But should that not be feasible, every accidental circumstance must be made use of, sometimes by going into a shop and buying some trifle. The shopman, who is often the landlord, may give information as to the poor lodger in his house; or you may see a woman standing at her door, and you can enter into conversation with her. You may also boldly go up the stairs if the street door is open, and knock at any room and announce that you

are a district visitor in that parish, and that you have come to see if there are any children who will attend the Sunday-school, or the night-school; or ask if there are any mothers who will come to the mothers' meeting; and talk of any of the parochial works with which you have first made yourself thoroughly acquainted. In this way, little by little, you can get to know the inhabitants of your whole street; you also will be known by all, you will be missed when you are absent, and you will be welcomed back with joy when you return.

But even after the first difficulties I have described are successfully overcome, all, or most, I suppose, would have, like myself, to pass through their apprenticeship of mistakes and deceptions. I had known the poor in the country from my childhood, and had lived amongst them as a friend knowing intimately the men, women, and youths of an extensive country parish. But there is a great difference between the country and the London poor. In judging of the worthiness of the latter we must

often rely entirely on our own judgment. It would be fatal to the influence of a visitor if he was to inquire about a family he was visiting from any one else in the same house. The London working classes are not neighbours to one another, even though they may live on the same floor and use the same staircase. Their great pride is "to keep themselves to themselves," and to know nothing about those about them. The isolation is perhaps best, for in some houses tenants will often change. To-day there may be a respectable lodger, to-morrow the reverse; and a poor man or woman is often judged by the companions they keep, and the accidental association with evil-minded persons may drag down the respectable to the lowest level.

To be of most use therefore to the poor, to comfort them in sorrow, to raise them when fallen, and to relieve them when in sickness, they must be known separately and individually, not only in classes at mothers' meetings or when ill; but at all times in their own

homes, when they are doing well and when they are prosperous; and then when trouble comes the visitor will be the friend to whom the poor will first turn, and who will best know how, and in what way, to relieve and to console.

CHAPTER II.

STARVATION.

I HAVE met with several cases very nearly approaching complete starvation, and I will mention a few to exemplify what I have said both as to the mistakes that can be made, and also to show how real distress can often only be reached by the district visitor. The first case was that of a man called Chapman.[1] I had been told that he and his wife were in great poverty. I called and found that he had lately broken his arm, and was unable to work. He was by trade a bootmaker. The room was bare,

[1] The names I have used throughout are not the real ones. The facts and circumstances are all true; but there is no clue by which the persons can be identified, except by those who already know their stories.

they appeared to be on the point of starving, and were without means of getting food. I supplied the woman with needlework, and gave them soup-tickets, and by these means kept them in food till the man's arm was well, and I hoped he would get work; but one day on calling I found they were gone: the landlord, tired of waiting for the rent that was never forthcoming, had turned them out. I then discovered that they were drunken characters. I had been deceived in the woman; she was not married. I lost sight of the man, but she became a great annoyance to me for a long time by writing begging letters and promising reformation, which never came.

John Little was even nearer starvation than Chapman. He lived with Mrs. Little in a small third-floor back-room. I had visited them occasionally through the winter. I saw that they were very poor, as they had no bed, though they had two chairs and a table. They never asked for anything, and as I often found him cobbling, I did not guess what a state of destitution he

was in. Besides, it has always been my habit to relieve sickness, but not to supplement slackness of work, as I might thereby encourage laziness. However, one cold day in February I found this man unable to work and looking very ill. I suspected it was from want of food, so I got him some at once. The next day I found him much worse, and I fetched the clergyman to him and sent for the parish doctor, leaving money and food with him. An hour after I had left the house Little broke a blood-vessel in the stomach, and was taken in a cab to the nearest hospital. There they said they would not receive him, so he was brought back home. Ice had been applied, but he was still losing blood; and in this condition he was dragged up again to the third-floor room. Soon after the parish doctor came, and ordered him at once to the workhouse infirmary. I called to see him there the next day, and was told that he had lost so much blood they had not expected him to live, and that his illness had been caused by long-continued want of food. However,

in the workhouse infirmary he met with every care and attention, being fed cautiously with beef-tea and wine. He remained there two months, and I then got him taken in for one month at the Clewer Convalescent Hospital, from whence he came back fat and well.

In the meantime Mrs. Little, a young woman of twenty-three, whose privations must have been equally great, had no means of getting her living. The day after he was taken away she said that I had been so kind to them she must tell me the truth, which was that she was not married to Little. Her story is like many others: she was in service near Fleet Street, and had asked one Whitsuntide for a holiday; her mistress had refused to allow her one, and she, thinking this an injustice, had, in spite of the refusal, gone out for the day with Little, who was courting her. On her return her mistress said she must leave at once; and so Isabella, who was an orphan, and had had to shift for herself since she was thirteen, had no home to go to, and went at

once to live with Little. As it often happens in such cases, the ten or twelve shillings that are needed for publishing the banns and the marriage fee were never ready, there were no children, and she said they both now wished to separate, as they found they could not make a living together. In fact the old saying had proved true in their case, that as want came in at the door, love had flown out at the window. Isabella also assured me she would undergo any privation to become respectable again. I called on the mistress near Fleet Street and found that the story was true, and I then did my best to help her; but it was a work of great difficulty to find anything for her to do. She had no character, so that she could not get into service; and she had not a sufficiently fallen character to be received into any Home or Refuge.

No one till they have tried can tell the difficulty there is in finding work for a woman who has lost her character; even scrubbing at a hospital for fourpence an hour was in such

demand that there was no vacancy. I almost despaired of finding her any means of living. But after a few weeks, during which time I gave her needlework and became satisfied as to her steadiness, I got her a place as maid of all work with a dressmaker whom I knew. I lent her money to buy some clothes, which she repaid to me, and for some time Isabella did well, and I saw her constantly; but after a year I found she had left her place; she had improved in appearance and condition, and I heard no more of her for some time, till one day I found her living again with Little and still unmarried. Any further efforts now to induce her to live respectably would have been useless after so much had been done, and I saw no more of her.

Though both these cases were very disappointing in one respect, I did not regret having helped them; but very different was the case of Ann Klein. If ever I feel dispirited in my work, I look back with satisfaction to my meeting with this poor woman. I heard of her

whilst visiting some one who was ill, and was told that the next door neighbour was very poor, but she was sure never to ask for anything. I went in at once and found a young woman with a baby in her arms. There was every appearance of great poverty, no bed, one broken chair, and a table. I found that Ann was married to a German who had been recalled a few months ago to serve in the war between his own country and France. He had left her in possession of a sewing-machine, with which she had hoped to keep herself; but work had been slack, and she had gradually pawned or sold nearly all she possessed, and did not know where to get a meal.

From the time I first saw Ann her progress was sure though slow, from shirt-making to charing, then to maid-of-all-work, kitchen-maid, and now she is a good plain cook, getting £25 wages a year. She has never disappointed me in the various occupations I have been able to find for her. She is a good and faithful servant, and I feel no doubt that she will always

continue to do well. So deeply impressed is this woman with the hard and bitter struggle of the very poor, so lost was she in this great city for want of a single friend to turn to in her dire distress, that her great wish is to devote herself to visiting the poorest, and she would have become a mission woman had not the payment offered her been too little to keep herself and her boy. All her hopes are centered on this child, and ever-mindful of the miserable poverty which she has undergone, her whole anxiety is to keep him from the same. Her gratitude to those who befriended her is most sincere; this is a quality which is not always met with; and as an example of the want of it, I will tell the story of the Lins.

I was asked to go and see a woman whose child had just died, and on going into her room I found Mrs. Lin seated on the floor one bitter cold day in February. She was nursing a little child in front of a very small fire; her husband was a painter out of work, and had been without employment for some time.

They had lost "their home," as the poor call it, meaning thereby their furniture and possessions, and the room was literally bare. The elder child had just died of want of sufficient food; this was the opinion of the parish doctor, who had been called in too late, and who did not expect the other child would live. Some milk was allowed for the child by the parish doctor's order, but much besides milk was wanted which the parish authorities would not give.

I provided her with all she wanted for the child, and looked after it constantly till it was out of danger. The man got a promise of work, and I lent him £1 to get his clothes and tools out of pawn, and he gave me his word to repay me in small weekly sums. He got work, and changed his house. I went there to see Mrs. Lin, and to my surprise found the walls of her room hung with little pictures. I asked her how she had got them; and she said that when her husband had brought home his first week's wages on Saturday she had spent three-and-sixpence in buying these pictures, as the room

looked so uncomfortable without them. She had not yet bought bed or bedding, and I should have said needed every necessary of life.

I was not over pleased, and said she should have repaid me before buying luxuries. In her reply she said she saw no harm in getting the pictures first, as she could not live with bare walls; and added that after all she was sorry I had come so often to see her in the other house, as it had only caused the neighbours to talk about her affairs. After that I discontinued my visits. I have met her sometimes since in the street, and she has tried to explain away what she had said; but I have taken no further interest in her.

The last case of extreme privation I shall mention is that of a woman who had asked me to get her into the Lying-in Hospital. She was a stranger to me, so I went to see her before getting the order. At first she seemed unwilling to admit me into her room; but soon she said, if I would forgive such a poor home, would I walk in. Indeed it was a poor home, without any

preparations for a new arrival. The room was clean; but the only piece of furniture was a broken washstand without crockery, a small wooden box, which served as chair or table, and an almost empty ticking in one corner. Her husband's employment was that of a painter, which is, like the last-mentioned case, the most improvident of trades; he had been behind with his rent for only three weeks, but was unfortunately under a hard landlord, who had put the brokers in, and all his goods had been taken. They had moved a few weeks back into the house I found them in, and he was still out of work. I made inquiries about them from their landlady, whom I knew—always the best person to apply to when you wish to find out the character of those who require help. I heard from her that the Prices were sober people, and she thought they were honest, as the young woman had often brought her in sixpence towards the rent when she had had the chance of earning it by turning a mangle for a neighbour. The landlady added, "I believe

she often went without the food she wanted in order to bring me this money." I was unsuccessful in getting Mrs. Price into the hospital, as at that moment there was fever there, and no more in-patients were admitted; but the poor woman was properly attended to by a midwife from the hospital, and in every other respect, I saw that she had all she needed. Bed, bedding, clothing, and food were supplied till she could get about and her husband get work.

Had she applied to the relieving officer she would not have been admitted into the house, without her husband, who would have been sent to Poplar, and put to hard labour; and from being away from London would have missed the opportunity of getting work when the season set in. Besides, they would both have become familiar with the inside of a workhouse and with some of the worthless class who are content to live on there, a burden to the industrious working man, who pays a heavy poor rate to support the too-often idle and

improvident. Many of the cases I have referred to were cases resulting from improvidence; but without the district visitor they would have been left to great misery, and in some instances might have died for want of help. They were cases for private charity, which is always forthcoming, but often misdirected, and I should think all would agree with me that assistance was here properly given. The poor law does something towards relieving the poor outside the workhouse, but it is often the least-deserving who apply there. It is the duty of the relieving officer to attend to any who apply at the workhouse, but not to search out those who, through misfortune of one sort or another, are bordering upon starvation.

CHAPTER III.

DRUNKENNESS.

ALL who visit the poor will know how many of their misfortunes are caused by drunkenness. Most of the cases brought before the magistrate arise from this vice, and much of the sickness of the children is caused by the intemperance of the parents. A great deal is being done to counteract this evil, and when we see coffee-houses rivalling the attraction of the public-houses there will be some chance of increased sobriety. There are already established in the neighbourhood of the Five Dials many coffee and eating-houses, one or two in most streets; but they are small houses, having perhaps their regular customers, but not showing a brilliant front like the Rose and the Crown

which has been lately established in Knightsbridge, and which gives a feeling of brightness and conviviality inside, a worthy rival of the gin-palace. When coffee-palaces and taverns, not coffee-houses, are widely established, the working man will greatly make use of them, and there will be fewer saddened homes.

Although but few drunken persons are met with in the street, there is a vast amount of drinking and crime following close upon it. But as I have come home after ten o'clock in the evening from the night school, I have rarely met a drunken man or woman. There will be occasional outbursts of drunkenness in the houses, when the quarrelling will awake and disturb all the neighbours. In one house where I visit, a drunken man threw his wife out of the second floor window, an incident which seems merely sensational when introduced into Mr. Jenkins's book on drunkenness, *The Devil's Chain*, but which is nevertheless strictly true. Therefore, though the passer-by may meet but

few drunkards, the district visitor will know numerous cases where, the father or the mother being given over to this habit, are bringing about such misery as is painful to dwell upon. In a few cases I have been able to rescue a boy or a girl from the wickedness entailed on them by their parents.

In general, the most desperate outbreaks will be after the Bank Holidays, when large numbers of respectable working people go with their children to spend the day in the country, the lowest taking their enjoyment in the public house. But I am glad to say that the police tell us that there has been less drinking this Christmas than in former years. Let us hope this is the beginning of better times. In three homes that I have visited I have often found the father in the middle of the day lying drunk in bed; yet out of each of these homes has a girl been rescued from almost certain ruin.

One was in such a deplorable state that she was taken to the police court as homeless and

destitute, and committed to a certified Industrial School.[1]

When she appeared before the magistrate she was in rags, without shoes or stockings; unable to read or write, her time had been spent literally in the gutter, playing and quarrelling all day, and her only knowledge was that of vice. Libbie is now a tall, nice-looking, bright girl, ready to go to service, having learned all that is needed to make her a good servant; and during the years she has been in the school, she has shown herself uniformly good and tractable.

Once she was allowed, in consequence of an oft-repeated request, to spend a few hours at her home: she had a yearning to see her mother and little brothers and sisters; but the disappointment of that visit was very bitter. Her mother was told the day she was to expect her, and when Libbie came, seemed glad to see her and proud of her improved appearance; but the child's feeling of horror at the filth and misery

[1] Industrial School, 19, Upper Charlotte Street, Portland Street.

she saw was great. When she was called for by the friend who took charge of her for this visit, she was found standing alone in the street. Her mother had wearied of the two hours her child had had to stop with her, and was gone away to some friend or public-house, leaving Libbie in the house, which was such a mass of dirt that she feared to sit down. Her little brother and sister were playing bare-footed in the gutter, and when she came away with her friend, the poor child burst into tears at the thought of such misery.

In this case, as in the next two, the only chance of saving the girl was a complete separation from such homes. The second was taken from almost as bad a home. Mary Lamb was fifteen, and seemed anxious to do well; so by providing her with clothes, the cost of which she repaid, a small place was got for her with a good mistress. This she kept for two years, leaving it for the foolish reason servants often give of wanting a change. However, I got her another one at Stepney, where she is still living,

coming up on the August Bank Holiday to a party I have in the country on that day.

Finding a good place for a girl is the best thing a district visitor can do for her. It involves little expense, as the clothes needed by her can, with advantage to herself, be easily repaid out of her wages. It will cost the visitor trouble and time, but it is worth it, and can be done by answering advertisements or by inquiring at registry offices. The interest shown by a lady in a girl will sometimes induce a good mistress to engage her.

Almost all the young women who may be found in the lying-in wards of workhouses are servant-girls, and from them you can learn the danger of service under a bad or indifferent mistress. Jenny Ash had suffered more from the drunkenness of her father than the two last-mentioned girls, and it was months and years before she could be said to be safely landed in a respectable life. The first time I saw her was in her father's room. The mother, whom I had called on, was out, and the girl, who was in

service at a public-house close by, had run across, as she often did, to see her mother. I knew she had had a child a few months back that had died. I spoke to her of herself, and she soon began to tell me how miserable she was, and how she longed to get right away, saying she knew she could never keep straight among all her bad companions. I promised to help her, and appointed to meet her there the next day. I came, but Jenny never appeared; and I heard after from the mother that her wages had been raised when her mistress heard she would leave, and Jenny had not had the courage to meet me again.

The cause of Jenny's first trouble was the drunken habits of her father. He could as a coach-builder earn £2 or more a week; but on Saturday he would generally, on leaving work, go to the public-house, drinking away a large part of his wages, till he was turned out; then he would stagger home and become violent; and often has Jenny been turned into the street by her brutal father, not knowing where to spend the night.

I often thought of her after this unsuccessful attempt to save Jenny, but saw nothing of her till, some months after, the mother met me in the street, and asked me to find her poor girl and rescue her from the misery she was in. I went back with Mrs. Ash and heard her story, which was, that Jenny had left her place and had come home; but her father would not allow her to remain, because he said she had misconducted herself, and the poor girl for weeks had slept on staircases or elsewhere. The mother said she had been able sometimes secretly to give her food, and she would show me where I might find her. I followed Mrs. Ash, who pointed out to me a small sweet-shop. I may say, by the way, that this sweet shop is kept by a poor Irish widow, who informed her visitor one day that she had five sisters, all married in Ireland to the nobility. This poor widow had shown much kindness to Jenny during the past weeks.

I went into her shop and said, "I think Jenny Ash is here; will you tell her I should like to see

her?" The widow dived into a very dark back room, and after a few minutes Jenny emerged. I told her I had heard of the trouble she was in, and had come to repeat my offer to take her to another home, where she could begin a new life. After a little persuasion she said she would come with me; and would I wait 'till she had "tidied" herself. She could only improve her appearance by soap and water, for her clothes were worn and scanty. I came back in ten minutes, and bade her follow me. We soon got into a cab and drove to Lambeth. There I took her to a Home,[1] where Mrs. Williams, the matron, is a loving, motherly woman.

I took the girl in with me, and said, "I have brought you Jenny, Mrs. Williams, whom we have been so long looking for; you will be glad to see her." Mrs. Williams took her by the hand and said, "My dear child, I am so glad you have come to me; I will take you down-

[1] Home at 19, Pratt Street, Lambeth, Refuge and Reformatory Union.

stairs to the others, and you shall help to get the dinner ready."

I need not say that Mrs. Williams won Jenny's heart, and put into her an ardent desire to become good. She stayed here some weeks, and then went to a Home at Streatham.[1] I often had letters from Jenny, telling me how she was learning to wash, trying to correct her bad temper, and how much she longed to see me. After she had been there a year I went down to see her, and found her looking pretty well, and happy. But somehow my visit seemed to have unsettled her. Why I cannot tell, except that perhaps the fact of her being visited by a lady had caused the others to be jealous, and unkind to her. Anyhow, a month or two later I heard she had left, and the next news I had of her was that she was in a situation, unfortunately not a good one.

I saw her once or twice by sending word by her mother, where she should meet me; but I feared for the future, and indeed after a while

[1] Magdalen Hospital, Country Home, Streatham, S.W.

her mother told me she had left her place, and was living with the father of her first child, and was expecting another. I then sent for Jenny again, and when she came, I almost persuaded her to leave the young man she was with if he would not marry her, and promised that I would then see to her. She said she must think about it, and would bring me her answer in a week. When she did come they were no longer living together, for he was in prison. There had been a "fight" in the street, he had rushed into the fray, she said, to save a woman. The police had come, and he was locked up.

Now the complication was great. I knew that if Jenny was not married before her child was born, she would probably never be married, and have nothing but a downward course of ruin. So I proposed to her to get the banns published and that she should tell him of it when she went to meet him, as he had asked her to do, when his sentence would be finished. She had shown me a letter from him from prison, calling

her his wife, and using many tender expressions of love for her, and anxiety as to how she would get on without him. The banns were published, and she was soon at the prison door. She was married the following Sunday just in time, and never let her husband know what part I had had in giving her this advice, or in furnishing her with money for the marriage fees. I have seen her since, and she is making a good wife, and keeps a tidy home.

Sometimes the law will step in and rescue the wife from the ill-treatment she has often to endure from her lord and master. But it does not make the home a very cheerful one, when the husband returns from his imprisonment to the wife, who has been the cause of it. A woman was telling me last summer how she dreaded the return of her husband at Christmas, who had been shut up for brutally ill-using her, and how much better she could get on without him. Another woman I knew whose husband was sentenced for three months on her account. Having probably

felt remorse for the punishment she had got for him, she celebrated his return by a good drink at the public-house; but on getting home they fell to fighting, and the husband inflicted injuries on his wife of so severe a nature, that he was now sentenced to the longest term of imprisonment possible, ten years. Fortunately she is now dead, so that the next return will not be commemorated in like fashion.

Some women bear with much ill-treatment without any complaint, and for the sake of their children will endure a great deal. Mrs. Dunn was a small, delicate woman with four children. I had known her for two or three years, and she had often told me her troubles, more inclined to do so from the great influence a few kind words had had upon her, words that were spoken to her by a lady when she was a girl. She had a stepmother who was very unkind to her, and she went early to service. In one place where she was the scrub of a lodging-house, one of the lodgers, a lady, used to notice her, and now and again say a kind word to her, and tell her

to be a good girl. Sarah left this place, but never forgot the words of kindness. They were the only ones she had ever heard. She was once in great extremity, and these words were as a talisman protecting her from evil.

She had been living at home at the time she was sixteen. Her father was lately dead. The stepmother took some pretext to quarrel with her, turned her into the street, and said she might find her own home. It was late in the evening, too late Sarah felt, to seek her friend whom she was sure would help her. So utterly disconsolate she wandered about the streets till she met a girl whom she knew. On hearing her story, the girl begged Sarah to come and live with her, and offered her amusements and pleasures without end. Sarah, with no prospect of any rest for the night, but remembering the friend she would seek in the morning, fled from her temptress. An inspiration led her to a workhouse, and knocking at those forbidding doors, they were opened to her, and there she found a safe refuge.

Much courage it must have needed for one so young who had never been inside that house, so dreaded by the respectable poor, or known any one else who had done so, yet to seek admittance there for herself. The next morning she left the workhouse, saw the lady, who believed her story, and found her a place which she kept till her marriage. This, and much besides of her life, she told me after the event I am going to speak of.

I was at home one afternoon when Mrs. Dunn was announced. She said, "I hope you will forgive my coming, but I want very particularly to speak to you." Her husband, she told me, had come home that afternoon, had accused her of misconduct, and had beaten and kicked her, and finally driven her out of the house. She had made no noise for the sake of her children, and came to me, as years before she had sought her other friend.

I felt sure the husband's jealousy was the result of his own imagination, caused partly, as I afterwards found, by a touch of madness.

I took Mrs. Dunn first to the clergyman of the parish to ask his advice, and we got her taken into that kind shelter, the House of Charity,[1] and we bade her stay there till her husband would have her back. Both the clergyman and I went next day to the husband, told him where his wife was, what we had done for her, and begged him to fetch her back, which after three days he did. The part that both the clergyman and myself took in the business was evidently pleasing to Dunn by the presents he gave us. To me he sent by his wife a box with my initials carved upon it, with a message, saying that he sent it as a remembrance of the way in which I had befriended his wife.

The instances I have hitherto given have reference to the drunkenness of men only; there are also many, though not so many, drunken women. Some I have helped for a long time, not knowing that they were given to drink; but once I have found out by some outbreak that this was an old established vice, though perhaps

[1] House of Charity, 1, Greek Street, Soho Square.

only of occasional occurrence, I have ceased to help them; for unless there are means of removing such women to quite a new neighbourhood, there is no chance of reformation.

The most desperate and hopeless case of a drunken woman that I have come in contact with was that of Mrs. Joiner. I have never seen her, but some months back I got a letter saying that the writer knew I was always ready to help any girls, and so he wrote to ask me to come and see after his Mary, and that if I asked Mr. Otter, he would know all about the undersigned, "Joiner." There was no address in the letter.

It was a fortnight after I got this letter, being in the country at the time, before I could call on Mr. Otter, a seller of cat's meat whom I knew. He said, Yes, he knew Joiner, a steady, hard-working man, with a desperate wife, always drunk, and now in prison. They had lived in his street; but where he now was Otter could not say; however, Joiner's boy often came for cat's meat, and if I waited I might see him.

I waited a while, and the boy came; and I made him lead me to his home. In a third-floor back room, in a wretched house, I found a girl of seventeen sitting by the fire in ragged clothes, and a young woman with two children. I learned that this was the home of Joiner's son, and that these were his children. He and his father were wood-carvers, and worked together in Wardour Street.

The brother had taken into his room his two sisters and his little brother, whilst the mother was for the eighth time sent to prison, coming out, as the young woman told me, each time worse and more depraved. The longest stay she had made there was eight months, after having in semi-drunkenness held her child to the fire till its toes were roasted off. The poor child is now dead; but there are three children still left—a very pretty girl of twelve, one of seventeen, and a boy. The girl, whom I found in wretched clothing, told me that the good clothes she had on coming home from service had been taken from her by her mother, who

had sold them for drink, and now the want of clothes kept her at home.

I left word that he, Joiner, should come and speak to me the next evening at the night-school. He then told me that, having received no answer for so many days to the letter he had sent to me, his brother-in-law, who was in a good position on the railway, had undertaken to send the girl of twelve years old to Suffolk, to a relation, as he was anxious that she should have left London before her mother came out of prison at Christmas. I said to him, "How kind your son's wife has been in taking in your children." "Ah," he said, "she is kind, but they are not married." When I asked him if he had never tried to persuade his son to marry, he said, "Yes, a time or two I have told him of it before the other workmen, but he has taken no notice." On further conversation on this subject I found he would be glad if they were married, so I promised to try what I could do. I found that the chief reason of their not being

married was the expense of the marriage fees. Young Joiner was willing enough, but they could not get together the necessary ten shillings. I made the circumstances known to the clergyman of the parish, and they are now married. Joiner seemed, as one may imagine, bewildered by the certain prospect of misery before him, his one wish being to get his children away in safe hands, as whenever his wife is out of prison he must have her to live with him. It may well be said that drunkenness is the chief cause of the misery of the poor. This vice is produced by many evils, and of these overcrowding and want of education are the chief; but of them we will speak in another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

OVERCROWDING.

THE overcrowding of the central part of London is one of the chief causes of the demoralization of a large number of the working classes. When we find father and mother, grown sons, and daughters, and young children all living and sleeping in one room, how can we wonder that there should not be a very delicate sense of morality among them. This crowding together of human beings like cattle in pens is not caused by their own fault. The rents are so high and the rooms so scarce, that more than one room cannot be had under six, seven or eight shillings a week; and how can a labourer earning one pound or twenty-five shillings a week afford this money for two

rooms? The poorest often having the largest families.

When the Artizans'-Dwelling Act has come fully into operation; when the houses are pulled down which are enriching their owners but brutalizing the tenants; when the railway companies and other bodies who, by way of improving the towns, are forced, as the Metropolitan Board was forced last year by the Committee of the House of Lords, to provide suitable houses for all the persons of the labouring classes that they displace; then shall we see the working man improving in morality and in temperance.

Of late years the poor have suffered much from the railway companies, and from various improvements that have taken place in the metropolis, no provision being made for the persons displaced. An instance can be given, as an illustration of this, in the clearance which is now going on in Saint Pancras for the purposes of the Midland Railway Company. In 1875 they acquired powers over a large

block immediately to the west of their present station, and containing about 10,000 persons almost exclusively of the poorer and labouring class. The Midland Railway Company has been clearing for a year, and is still clearing, so that there has already been a vast displacement of population, and yet nothing whatever has been done to house those ejected. No doubt in most cases some small money payment has been made to the individuals who removed; but that would not meet the mischief of overcrowding the other homes of the poor by driving into them those ejected persons, and the disturbance to the class and individuals by forcing them to seek homes far removed from their employment. The question of the necessity of the workpeople living near their employment was brought out very strongly in evidence before the Lords' Committee in 1877, when the Metropolitan Streets Improvement Bill was being opposed for the sake of provision being made for displaced persons of the labouring class.

It was pointed out then with great force that it was not only the heads of the families who worked, but also the children who lived with their parents, widows, also, often supporting their children by daily work; and that the position of the home should be such that all should come home if possible for their dinner. A mile extra every day backwards and forwards to their work represents one hour a day in time lost, to say nothing of the fatigue and labour. These unskilled labourers in employment get sixpence an hour, and sixpence an hour per day is 3*s.* a week tax that would be put on these workmen if they were removed, as was proposed, from the West End to Gray's Inn Road. But it is much more than the mile, because it is breaking up the home; it is, as was said by one of the witnesses, sending a man to get his dinner at a public-house instead of having it at home; and it is not merely that the sum of eightpence (which he would have to pay for his dinner) would feed the whole of the family, if his wife purchased the provisions

and cooked them, but he gets into the habit of going to the public-house, where he must drink for the good of the house as well as eat, and that respectability is broken up which is one of the great securities for the improvement of the working class.

Many will urge that workmen will be better housed and at far cheaper rents in the suburbs of London. Why therefore encourage them to overcrowd the town? To many classes of workmen it is an impossibility to live any distance from their employers. Shoemakers and tailors have to go to their shops for orders sometimes three or four times in the day. The work may not be in when the workman calls in the morning, and he must call again in the afternoon. If he is a tailor, and he has to do what is called "baste up," it must be taken back to the shop at once, the wife must be the carrier, whilst the tailor keeps on stitching. If he is a bootmaker even for such shops as you see in St. James's Street, he must send for his work once or twice a day. A pair of boots is not made by one

workman alone; it will take three different workmen to complete the one pair, and these must all come to the shop for their work.

Again in the building trades it is hard on a man to live out in the suburbs. He is now paid by the hour, not by the day; so that if rain comes on in the morning there will be no work done in the afternoon, the bricklayer, the mason, the painter, and their labourers will be dismissed for the half-day There will be no cheap workmen's trains till the evening, and so they must loiter about the streets for hours, wasting time and often money. Whereas if their homes are within walking distance they will not be so much the losers by being turned off their work.

The necessity which is thus shown for most of the working classes in London living near their employers causes this overcrowding which is so much to be deplored, as it causes, as I have said, to such a great extent the demoralisation of the people. That good houses

will improve the habits and morals of the people is shown by the occupiers of the Peabody dwellings. None are admitted whose wages average over £1 a week; but most of the tenants there will be found with higher wages. They will rise as the men continue steady and industrious, the result to a great extent of improved houses. The average earnings of the head of each family in residence in 1876 was £1 4*s.* 4½*d.* The Peabody houses are built, as all know, from the magnificent gift and bequest of £500,000 from the American of that name, and they are an immense boon to the workmen of London. The management is in the hands of a committee who look well after the working of this charity. The dwellings are round a square of about half an acre in size; the court is paved, and the children can at all times play there in safety, not, as in other quarters, obliged to play in the gutter amongst refuse and dirt, sometimes straying away from home to get run over by a careless cabman. I have known this happen in

several cases, and a child brought back with a broken limb or with some fatal injury.

There are five stories to the Peabody dwellings, and running along the top of the building is a covered washhouse and laundry open at all times for the use of the tenants; as are also sculleries and bathrooms. A staircase runs up the centre of each of the three sides of the building, and the passage that leads from each side of the staircase opens on to three or four sets of apartments, having at the end water-sink, &c. There are two or three rooms to each family, and the rents vary from four shillings to six, according to the number of rooms and the floor on which they are situated. The rent must be paid regularly once a week; but in case of illness I have been told they are indulgent, and let it lie over.

The Waterlow Buildings are on a different plan; there each family has its own street-door opening on to one of the numerous spiral staircases. The rents are five shillings and upwards, differing according to the locality where the

houses are built, and according to the number of the rooms.

I have seen many of the Waterlow Buildings in different parts of the town, and the people appear very comfortable, and the rooms are never unlet. There the apartment consists of two rooms, kitchen, dust-shaft, coal-bin, water, and all other conveniences. These houses are built by a company which pays £5 per cent., and the shares of which are now above par. Would that we had more of these dwellings all over the town! The rents are higher than in the Peabody Buildings, and there is no inquiry as to the earnings of a man before he is admitted. The Peabody houses being a trust to be used for the poor of London, the test of low wages had to be fixed as a qualification for entrance, or workmen who could not be considered poor would gladly have taken the improved house to the exclusion of the poorer ones.

The applicants are so numerous that their names are down for months before a room is vacant. Any one who would like to see these

Peabody Dwellings can do so, and will find a fine square building near the Army and Navy Co-operative Stores in Victoria Street, which is well worth a visit.

When I first took charge of a district, it consisted, as I have said, of one street and a court; but after some years, when the workers I had first begun with left, I took a larger district, and latterly have had a general acquaintance with all parts of the parish.

The poorest part is a market, and one court near to it is called the Butcher's Row; this was the abode of that fortunate butcher from whom the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire bought the much-desired vote for Fox's election in Westminster. A slaughter-house is close by, and the butchers carry the carcases of the sheep from thence to their shops, hanging over their heads like a hood. We learn from the Registrar-General that butchers are a short-lived class. The life is hard, and the drinking is hard; but when seen in their own houses, they may be as gentle as the lambs they

slaughter, and outside I have experienced nothing but civility from them.

In the lowest streets and courts the street-door is never shut, and the workman's caller, who gets his living by awaking at four and five in the morning those who have to begin early their daily toil, will often tumble over some poor houseless creature who is sleeping on the stairs that are always accessible. The staircase in these houses is often so dark that you have to grope your way up, fearful of what you may encounter, judging from the condition of the passage below. The numbers that have to sleep and live in one room is the worst evil of this neighbourhood. The Sanitary Inspector may be informed of any case that comes under the notice of the visitor, and may summon the landlord; but I am told that so impossible is it to get rooms in this densely-crowded neighbourhood, that the magistrate will often not enforce the law.

What must the noble lords forming the committee already referred to on the Metropolitan Streets Improvement Bill have thought

when a witness was brought before them who, with her husband, three working sons, a younger girl and boy, all lived in a room fourteen feet by thirteen? And what made the condition of that family still worse, which their lordships were not told of, was that the man was kept at home permanently by a bad leg, that required so much attention that he ought to have been in the infirmary. In another case where the inspector tried to interfere there was in one room husband and wife and eight children, the eldest twelve, most of them sickly; and in addition to all these human beings, rabbits were kept, adding to the closeness and want of air. Huddled together as these families are, many houses consisting of eight rooms, and holding seven families, can we wonder that the father who has worked hard all day should not wish to return to such a home sooner than he need; and can we also wonder if in the morning, after sleeping in such tainted atmosphere, he should be unable to begin his work without a glass of spirits? If he could plunge his head into fresh

water, he might perhaps shake off the heavy dullness consequent on such a night; but water is often as great a luxury to the poor as good air.

And how patient are the poor, how uncomplaining! often not knowing that they have a right to complain. The law says that all windows must open from the top as well as from the bottom; but what tenant could get his landlord to have this done unless the landlord cared for ventilation. Such is the scarcity of rooms, that once the working man has got one he gladly keeps it, and I have known women be months and sometimes years trying to get into better quarters. In a house I know well, for years the drinking water was drawn from an old beer barrel without a lid, which stood between an unglazed window and an open door in the basement, and under a butcher's shop. Through the window, which was on a level with the street, every breath of wind would blow in the refuse, the germs of disease and animal life, so that in summer the water was alive

with animalculæ, visible to the naked eye. The careful mother boiled the water before giving it to her children, but the careless one did not. Can we wonder that the father should go to the public-house, preferring beer there, to foul water at home? Can we also wonder that the children grew up sickly and complaining? I am glad to say that at least in this house, owing to a new landlord, the butt is gone, a large slate tank with a cover substituted, and the water is now clear and pure. Considering that the owners of such houses, where there are weekly tenants, often make over ten per cent., they can well afford such expenses.

In another case, the death of a most excellent woman, for whom I had the greatest respect, was caused by the condition of the water and the drains. Her husband had had a wholesale business in the City, and she had lived in a good house of her own, keeping a servant. In the failures in the City some years ago, her husband lost everything and died, her sons were taken charge of by friends,

and her daughter, a very pretty, well-educated girl, served in a baker's shop. The mother had taken a poor little place, where she sold sweets and grocery, and by perseverance and attention got up a small business; last summer she felt ill and languid with the bad smell outside the house, which came in through the open door. In vain she applied to her landlord; nothing was done. At last, having been in a position of life which had taught her the proper action in this matter, she wrote to the Sanitary Inspector; the tank, which was under an oil and tallow chandler's shop, was emptied. At the bottom were found two inches of mud, the decomposing bodies of fourteen rats, a bar of soap, candles, and many dead beetles, and from this tank the poor woman had to get all the water she used.

The Inspector said the smell of the drains was horrible, and that something must be done; but nothing was done, before the poor woman became so ill that she was taken to the hospital, where she died after a few weeks illness. When

we hear of the poor being deprived of these necessaries of life, fresh air and good water, do we not wonder at their goodness and patient endurance, instead of being disgusted by their brutality? Might not such hardships make them more drunken and more immoral, and is it not wonderful to find amongst them, as we do often find, happy, bright homes and well-brought-up children?

Most of the house-property in this part of London belongs to small proprietors, who in many cases buy up poor houses, never repair them, and make all they can out of the tenants. Lately, in a street once of known ill-fame, a man died, leaving a large fortune which he had amassed during many years by exorbitant rents, derived from the poorest houses in this street, where he had made large profits and had spent nothing. For a good room, or for two rooms, I know many cases of men who would have gladly paid one or two shillings a week more rent, that their growing families might be better housed.

In the small district of Bedfordbury, commonly called the Bury, behind St. Martin's Lane, are 3,000 persons. They are all to be found in one street 500 feet in length, and in fourteen courts. Can such a number be decently housed in so small a space? Happily, this part has come under the action of the Artizans' Dwelling Act, and we may hope to see model lodging-houses spring up in the place of these narrow courts.

CHAPTER V.

ROMANCE.

WE must now turn our thoughts away for a few moments from all this suffering, crime, and sorrow, and see what there is in the lives of the poor that is both romantic and poetical. First, let me quote a passage from Kingsley, which I have kept written in my note-book in case I should ever weary amidst discouragements. "How many thousand heroines there must have been, how many thousand there may be now, of whom we shall never know! But still they are there. They sow in secret the seed of which we pluck the flower and eat the fruit; and know not that we pass the sower daily in the street. Perhaps some humble ill-dressed woman, earning painfully her own

small subsistence. She who nurses a bed-ridden mother, instead of sending her to the work-house. She who spends her heart and money on a drunken father and reckless brother, on the orphans of a kinsman or a friend. She who—but why go on with the long list of great little heroisms with which a clergyman comes in contact daily? And it is one of the most ennobling privileges of a clergyman's high calling that he does come in contact with them."

These words show how Kingsley, whose mind was always intellectually active, could find amongst the poor much to admire, and could see in their lives a beauty that minds less cultivated and less poetical would fail to see. How much is the work of the district visitor, as well as that of the clergyman, lightened if he sees with Kingsley's eyes. For fatigue *does* accompany this work. The visitor has not angel's wings to carry him up those oft-trodden three pair of stairs. If he has the sympathy which will make his work welcome,

he will also have the tender heart that will be wounded by the suffering he sees. If he is ever ready to give his help to those who need it, he will be chilled by the ingratitude of those he has befriended. Though he has perseverance, he will still be often dispirited by his unavailing efforts to lift up the sufferer and the sinful. In these moments such thoughts as those we read of by Kingsley will give him new vigour and strength for the never-ending battle of life, whether in himself or in others.

And surely writers both of prose and poetry, painters also, have all taught us in their different way, sympathy for the poor. Who that has read of Oliver Twist, of Little Nell, Poor Joe and the Marchioness will not have seen again among the London poor scenes such as Dickens describes so tenderly and pathetically?

Have we not all felt the truth of these words of Hood?—

> "Work—work—work!
> Thy labour never flags;
> And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
> A crust of bread—and rags.

That shattered roof—and this naked floor,
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!
Work—work—work
In the dull December night,
And work—work—work
When the weather is warm and bright.
Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet,
With the sky above my head
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that cost a meal."

The visitor to the poor in London must often have seen such scenes. Perhaps the shirt is being stitched as Hood describes it; perhaps the restless wheel of the sewing-machine is for ever in movement, which may be making the dainty linen for the lady or sometimes the heavy coat for the policeman, work which the needlewoman is thankful to get, and for which she gets paid two-and-sixpence a coat, finding her own thread. But whatever the sewing may be, we have all seen the wearying, monotonous

driving work of the poor sempstress. And the longing which the poet expresses of seeing once more the cowslip and the primrose is a most real and passionate desire of many an overworked Londoner. Never have I heard an expression of envy over my better fortune in the wheel of life but when I have said to any of my poor friends that I was going into the country; then generally they will break out into longings to leave their dismal streets and see nature in her beauty.

Painters, as well as poets, may reveal to us the pathetic beauty to be found in the lives of the poor. Does not the stone-breaker of Brett, whom we see dying by his heap of stones on the road-side, give us a glimpse into the sorrowful weariness of the worn-out labourer? If we have never been struck with the beauty of the village children dancing home from school, will not Mason's pictures reveal to us that beauty, and make us love those boys and girls who seem so happy in their joyous innocence? Do not all these pictures, poems,

and tales teach us that there is much beauty as well as sadness in the suffering lives of the poor?

As in looking into a small pool of water remaining in the gutter of the dirtiest court, after a heavy shower of rain, we may see reflected the clear blue sky and the fleecy white cloud, so may we see amongst the poorest and the most suffering the reflection of Divine love and of Divine endurance. These sights may be hidden from the eyes of some; if so, let them cultivate their minds by literature and art, and they will lighten their own work and bring brightness to the homes they visit.

And will my readers think with me that there is poetry in the story of Thomas Wright? They would find him in a low-roofed room of a London house, the walls are covered with dirty paper, the ceiling seems never to have been whitewashed. On the bed has lain for seven years a poor woman, so disfigured that none will look on her willingly a second time. And why is she here? Because she

has an old husband and a strong son, who love her tenderly. Often has the relieving officer offered to take her into the Infirmary; but no, the young man, who is past thirty, says he will never tire of working for his mother. For her sake he has never married. He and his father sit all day together at their bench sewing and stitching away at the boots which bring them their daily food, and the few comforts they can get for the sick woman. For her sake the son cultivates a few plants outside the window, so that the breeze may be scented as it comes to her lying on her poor bed. The father is past seventy, so that he earns but little; the son works early and late, for he wants all he can get to keep himself, his father, and his mother. His rent is four-and-sixpence a week, and he pays a neighbour to come in every day to make his mother's bed. The bed is as nice and clean as it is possible for them to keep it. The neighbours tell me that Thomas will work hard till ten, and then he will go out and walk up and down the street smoking the

pipe which he has denied himself before. If you speak to him of his mother, he says simply that he will work and work for her, for he could not bear to think of her being in the workhouse away from him. To me this seems a long-enduring devotion that few sons in comfortable homes equal or surpass.

A love as deep and tender as Thomas Wright's was that of William Brown for his sister Nelly. She was a bright pleasant girl, a waistcoat-maker by trade. William is a carpenter, and they lived at home with their parents and a younger brother. One summer, Ellen and her eldest brother had both been ill. They were sent to the country to get up their strength, and lodged in a cottage in Berkshire; most of the expenses being paid by William, through a loan. The beauty of the country so charmed the girl that two years after this visit, having saved up through the year a little money, she went down again with her younger brother to spend a fortnight at the same place.

They lodged with an old widow who lived in

part of a lonely old manor-house of historical interest, for there had lived Belinda, and we can still see the library where Pope spent many days with his friend.

This large house was built in the time of Henry I., and as you face it you can count seventeen gables and many latticed windows: the architecture is of no particular time—it was restored, as the date on the water pipe tells us, in 1664. Behind the house is a broad terrace, and below is the garden, to which you can descend by a broad flight of stone steps. Beyond, you see fields and woods, and close by are a succession of fish ponds which we find so often near old houses. Besides the memory of Pope and Belinda which invests with interest this old Court, there is the story told of the beautiful lady who crawled on her knees for a mile to this house, to obtain from her husband a grant of bread for all the poor around.

These and many other stories connected with the old manor-house, were told to Ellen, so that in addition to the real enjoyment of the

country life she had the romantic interest of bygone days—a new feeling to the poor London girl.

The old widow with whom she lodged has told me how Nelly would be out as early as four in the morning, anxious to hear the birds in their first outburst of rapturous song. She would come back for breakfast at eight, often bringing with her branches of wild roses that she gathered from the hedges. She would go out again till midday, wandering over the commons brilliant with the yellow gorse and broom, through the endless fir woods, or the lovely meadows, then so rich with many flowers. Sometimes she would lie down under the shady trees listening to the lark as—

"Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest."

She told me that these days were to her days of the greatest happiness, and any of us who love the country can we not imagine what an

exquisite delight it was to the poor waistcoat-maker, who had never before left the dark and dirty streets of London with all their bustle, their misery of poverty, their angry voices, their never-ceasing oaths falling always on the ear of the passer-by, to have left all this behind her, and to find herself alone with Nature—with the clear blue sky above her and feeling the soft and fragrant air, and hearing nothing but the hum of the insect or the song of the bird?

Ellen had not had much schooling, but she could read, and she had many books whilst in the country from the village library. The literature of the poor is often confined to the Bible and the hymn-book; with these they become familiar in their Sunday services, and what can more beautifully express their thoughts, their adoration, and their love than the Psalms or many of the hymns? Of an evening, Ellen often sat under an old haunted oak that was near the manor-house. The evening hymn she had so often sung at church was to be fulfilled in her case.

"As now the sun's declining rays
At eventide descend,
So life's brief day is sinking down
To its appointed end."

And as after the sun had sunk below the horizon, we see the brilliant after-glow, so after Ellen's brief day was over, a peace and holiness illumined the lives of those who had loved her in her own home.

She went back to London happy with the thoughts of these bright days, but, alas! she carried with her the seeds of a fatal illness. I saw her in the autumn. She could no longer work, and was under a doctor's care. I was sure from what I heard, that she was not being properly treated, and I urged upon her to go to some hospital. At last she did so; but too late had she delayed, for when she showed her prescriptions to the doctor, she was told that there was nothing in them to do her good. Peppermint was the principal ingredient, and the poor father had thought how clever the doctor must be; the medicines had been

changed so often, and each bottle had cost him two-and-sixpence.

Ellen was admitted at once to the hospital after being examined, and there she remained for five months, undergoing seven operations, all without chloroform by her own request.

She had by her courage and patience endeared herself to all; the doctors praised her, and sent her presents from their homes; and the good and skilful All Saints' Sisters who nurse at University College Hospital said that Ellen's cheerfulness and quiet endurance of pain and suffering had made all in the ward love her.

She would tell them how she longed to get well to be again with those she loved so dearly at home, and to see once more those green pastures she had so joyed to wander through during that happy time in Berkshire. But it was not to be. She had got a disease so uncommon in England, though common in Iceland, that when the hundred students were round her bed hearing the lecture upon her

case, Ellen heard the doctor say that this was the third known case in England—the first one recorded, being fourteen years ago, so that particular attention was to be paid to this case of hydatids.

But all the skill of the surgeon and the perfect nursing were unavailing. She had whilst in the country eaten unwashed watercress at the wrong season; the hydatids had been left in her too long, and though she was frequently operated upon, they continued breeding again and again, till she died last June. During all that time her mother went every day to the hospital: and as soon as the brother was allowed, he also would be there daily when his work was over—often only able to sit and look at her, whilst tenderly holding her hand.

The day after she had died, I was in his house, and I saw William, who had just come in from his work; he showed me, wrapped carefully in silver paper, a beautiful cross of fresh white flowers, and, with a voice broken with sobs, he said to me, "The woman at the shop where I

have been getting Nelly's flowers gave me this as a present to-day to lay upon her. She said I had bought so many flowers, she would give me the last I should want for her." And true enough, he had seldom gone to see his sister without taking her some few flowers that she loved so much.

She was his one thought during these long months. Once as I came in I found him looking at a letter, and he quickly said: "I am so glad you have looked in, for I had written to that good clergyman who had come to see me when I was ill to ask him to go and see Nelly, and then I did not know where to find him: now you will send him this letter." The clergyman had left the parish and gone to one some way off, but he got the letter, and went at once to the hospital to see Nelly. She was so glad to see him that he went to her often. He taught her, comforted her, and she had the happiness of receiving for the first time the Holy Communion.

The brother used often to tell me how grate-

ful he was to the clergyman who had done so much for his dear Nelly. He knew that he had not followed out all that he had been taught when he had been ill; but it would be different now. And the father, mother, and brother could not say enough of the gratitude they felt to one who had so much helped to make their beloved one suffer patiently, and die peacefully.

It is now many months since she died. William never misses going to the distant church of his friend, for which he has himself made a handsome carved reading-desk, and a Litany stool; and on Easter Sunday he arrived unexpectedly at seven in the morning with his arms full of flowers to decorate the church.

But these stories would never end. I could tell of the boy of fifteen whose mother has died of drink, after, when partially drunk, over-laying two of her babies at different times. The father never comes home till late, and is often drunk. The sister Eugenia, who is seventeen,

might have done something for the home, but says she cannot "get on with father," and has taken lodgings; but Louis will hurry home from his work to see to the two little girls who are shivering at home, often without fire; and he will tend them as carefully as could any mother.

Let us go up a dark and winding staircase, and there, high up, overlooking the roof, you will see a tailor sitting all day at his window cross-legged on his bench. He is always stitching at his work; and often you will see beside him the little child asleep, it has crept up to be near the father it loves so passionately. He is a Cumberland man, and in all the weary toil of his London life he will often turn his thoughts to those blue fells, and those breezy moors which he has left for ever. In another room, smaller and more crowded, you may hear of the little boy who gets up of a cold winter's morning, long before his brothers and sisters are awake, to light the fire, so that "father should have a warm cup of tea in bed." The father is good and loving to his children; he works

at home, with his eldest son of nineteen, at bootmaking. In this same room lives his wife, a girl of fourteen, and three little boys. The room is small, the ceiling is never white-washed, the walls have dirty paper, but within it, there is a wealth of love, springing from that little Christopher to his ailing father.

But in these stories I have told, showing how much tender, self-denying, self-sacrificing love there is amongst the poor, I have not mentioned any between married people. We do not see such striking instances of unselfish love between them as of children for their parents; it would seem as if the struggle for existence made that feeling die out. But there are exceptions; and one man I knew, whose wife left him, was so miserable that he tried to drown himself, and after being brought to life again was taken to the hospital, and such was his despair that at the first moment he was left alone he jumped out of the window, and was picked up dead. Another man I know, whose wife had also left him, was so broken by the misery of her loss, that from being a respectable tradesman, he sank with his

children to such a deplorable condition that a neighbour came to ask me to interfere in their behalf. But it was beyond my power to help them; the law alone may some day protect the children, and rescue them from the degradation of the father's home.

I know a woman who was deserted by her husband; she was Scotch, and had a dogged determination that would overcome all obstacles, and so having determined to find her husband she succeeded in doing so, though she travelled for that purpose from Glasgow to London. Many years ago her husband had left her in Scotland, saying that as work was slack, he would come up to London to look for it there, and that she should follow him. She heard from him once after he left her, but never again. For a while she fretted and feared he had got into trouble, but then she made up her mind to go to London to look for him. She came up and went to service, saying to herself that she *should* see him if he were yet in London, and true enough after she had been three years in London she saw him pass her one day in a dray cart.

She staggered at this sight for which she had so long been craving, but before the cart rattled away, she caught sight of the name of the owner painted on a board. As soon as she recovered herself she went into a stationer's and asked to be allowed to look at a Directory. There she found the name she had read, and the next time she had leave to go out she journeyed down to Hammersmith. She found her husband, but he was not alone—her place had been filled. Her love, she said, was now turned to hatred, and her one desire was to make him provide for her. He did so for a time, but then went away to France, and for many a year she had been alone in a strange land.

In this chapter I have spoken of some of "the great little heroisms" that Kingsley alludes to, and should the reader not weary of my tales, he will find many more such heroes and heroines in the remaining pages, and will agree I hope with me, when I say that a real knowledge of the poor will make us admire, as well as blame or pity them.

CHAPTER VI.

WIDOWS AND PARISH RELIEF.

THERE is a great difference of opinion as to whether out-door relief should be given or not, and I used to think the poor would be better without it. But now, knowing as I do, more of the class of persons with whom able-bodied respectable women would have to associate in the workhouse, I am inclined to think that widows of good character, who need help, should have relief outside the house. They can obtain it in this way; they must first apply in person at the House: the Relieving officer then visits the and applicant, if the want is urgent, either in a case of sickness or starvation, he may give what he thinks necessary in the way of food, and must mention this to the Guardians at the next

relief Board Meeting, and if the relief is to be continued, the person relieved, or a relation, must attend at the same meeting, to answer any questions the Guardians may think proper to put.

The opinion of the Relieving officer will be taken to a great extent as to the fitness of the case. It is rare for a Guardian to know anything of the persons coming before him, or to make inquiries for himself about them. Before the year 1866, many of the West-End parishes, such as St. James's, St. George's, St. Margaret's, and St. Pancras did not come under the working of the Poor Law Act, of 1834. But in that year 1866, a fresh Act was passed, which brought them all under one law. Previously the poor relief was ordered and administered in the parish of St. James's, by the Governors and Directors who themselves visited all persons requiring relief.

Now there is an officer appointed for that work, and few Guardians would think it their business to verify the statement made to them

by this official. The new system has its advantages. Paid work is no doubt more certain, punctual, and more efficient; but it would be well if the Guardians were sometimes to visit those whom they relieve, so that they should know what the homes of the poorest are like, and also satisfy themselves that there is no favouritism in the way the relief is given.

I can only speak of the Relieving officer in the parish in which I visit, and I can certainly testify to the efficiency of his work. I have heard of him repeatedly from many persons I have known in receipt of out-door relief, and all who were deserving and respectable have spoken of him to me as kind and considerate, whilst the worthless and drunkards have told me of his harshness, his cruelty and his injustice. These different estimates of his character show that he understands what his duty is, and fulfills it.

The relief given to a widow will be proportionate to the number of the children she has to maintain. It will be two shillings and sixpence, three shillings, or sometimes four shillings a

week, with two, three, and sometimes four pounds of bread and meat. With this help and with any work she can get, a widow may be able to bring up her children in her own home —teaching them the most valuable of all lessons, self-dependence, and saving them from the taint of pauperism.

The question whether relief should be given to a widow or not must depend on her own conduct. If she is given to intemperance in the smallest degree, her children will be better off in the district schools. I can mention Mrs. Court as an instance of the hopelessness of any permanent good being done to a woman, either by the parish or by charity, if she ever takes a glass too much. She was left a widow with two children and one unborn. She worked hard at a seed factory till the poor baby arrived. She was helped through her confinement, and for some time after by private charity and by parish relief, and the latter was continued to her for a year or two. She first tried charing; but her enforced absence from her children

was the ruin of them. She would often not get home till eight or nine at night; the baby she would leave with a neighbour, but the little children of seven and eight were left alone to find their own way to school. Often she would come home at night, and find the sickly boy sitting crying on the doorstep, whilst his sister Katie was amusing herself about the streets, learning, as may be guessed, nothing but evil.

Hoping to make Mrs. Court's condition better, and to give her work that she could do at home, and so look after her children, a mangle was got for her. But here things did not do much better: she was of an easy nature and she often had her room full of idle, gossiping women, and sometimes she would drink more than was good for her. Katie came to such fearful trouble that on her case being represented to the Committee of the National Orphan Home she was at once admitted. The boy became more sickly, and finally the mangle broke. There

was no money to mend it, no friend at hand to apply to, and whilst Mrs. Court was out one day, one of her familiar gossips sold the mangle for eighteen-pence,—the mangle for which two pounds ten had been given.

Mrs. Court has left the parish and I have seen no more of her. She was a well-meaning woman and had known comfort and ease. Before her marriage she had been a nurse in a gentleman's family, but the battle was too hard, and she had given in. Servants little know to what misery they may be brought by improvident marriages. I know a pretty delicate woman who was once a lady's maid. She was an orphan and had married a handsome young painter: he became sick, he was in no club and had no savings, and to such straits was she put that she told me she has many times gone out at night to sell matches in the street to get bread for her children.

But to return to the use of out-door relief. Mrs. Blossom was left on her husband's death with six children,—the eldest eleven years old.

Her husband, a most respectable man, had been ill for two years with an internal complaint, of which he died in the Highgate Infirmary. For a long time they had "lived on their furniture, clothes, &c.," and when I first saw them, during the husband's illness, I was shown a jug full of pawn-tickets.

I would here say that the pawnshop appears to me, to be a great boon to the poor. It may encourage improvidence in some, no doubt it does, but though a man has saved money and put it by in the bank and belongs to a club, he may yet want more after a long illness, than he can get from either of these sources, and the power of leaving his goods in pledge to be redeemed in better times, seems to me a great benefit. The interest is enormous—5*d.* in the pound for every month; but private charity is uncertain and the pawnbroker is always at hand, and accessible to all. When death terminates a long illness and there is no chance of ever redeeming the goods, the pawn-tickets will be sold to neigh-

bours, who make a good bargain by this transaction.

Mrs. Blossom was left, as I said, with six children, but the baby soon died from privation, and a beautiful little girl of six fell down the stairs whilst her mother was out at work,—had a concussion of the brain and died in a week. The eldest boy at eleven years old passed the fifth standard, and in consequence he was allowed by the School Board to go to work, promising to attend a Night School. If he had not been so forward in his learning he would have had to remain at school till he was thirteen; as it was, he got a place as errand boy and brought back to his mother six shillings a week. With his earnings, with her own washing and charing, with parish relief of three shillings, three pounds of bread, and three of meat a week, and with the help of dinner tickets and of old clothes for her children that I was able to give her, she managed to struggle on, keeping her children regularly at school till Ernest at ten was in the fourth standard, and allowed to work half-time.

The present to me of old clothes from many of my friends, is a most valuable help, and it is a gift which would be prized by all district visitors.

Mrs. Blossom's youngest child, Laura, could not walk at three, owing to rickets, and this added to her difficulties; but after four months spent in the country, three at Clewer Convalescent Hospital,[1] and one at Mrs. Dalton's Cottage House,[2] Laura was able to walk. Tom, the eldest boy, has lately gone as reader and page to a distinguished scholar, who writes of him, "I like the little boy much, he is a gentleman."

Here we see what the boy had got by the careful bringing up of his parents, and by their good example. Would he not probably have lost that delicacy of feeling, that tact and punctual attention to his duties which this praise seems to imply, if he had become at eleven years old an indoor pauper.

[1] St. Andrew's Convalescent Hospital, Clewer.

[2] Mrs. Dalton's Cottage Home, Little Burstead, Essex.

He would also not have had that honourable feeling of independence which he got from being able so young to bring home to his mother the wages he was so proud of earning for her. Thanks be to the discernment of the Relieving officer or of the Guardians, whoever it may be, who allowed Mrs. Blossom sufficient relief to enable her to keep herself and children out of the workhouse. And now, after having received it for two years, she is able, whilst thanking the Board for what they have done, to say that she will try to get on without further relief. She is a delicate woman, but she has a strong spirit and a brave heart. It is a delight to meet with such characters and to be able to help them. For eight long months she had walked daily to Finsbury Square, which is three miles from her home. She was glad to clean offices there, being well paid by six shillings a week for an hour's work a day.

She feels much the fatigue of these six miles walk, but she knows too well the difficulty of finding work to give this up till she has some-

thing else in view. However, the future is brighter for her, as last Christmas she got from the St. James's Vestry the Le Quainter charity of £15 which is given to former rate-payers of that parish, in which Mr. Blossom had years ago rented a house and shop. The charity was left by Le Quainter, who died in the last century. He was once nearly ruined and his goods taken for the want of £20: this sum a friend lent him. It bore fruit so that Le Quainter on his death left large sums to different charities, and amongst others, this one which gives every year £15 to twenty poor persons who are or have been housekeepers in St. James's parish. Mrs. Blossom spent £2 for immediate wants, and gave me the £13 to keep until she could meet with a small business in her husband's trade of portmanteau-maker.

If a working man would belong to a Friendly Society which not only would provide for his own sickness and death; but also, as in the Foresters' Club, will give to his widow an allowance for the first year of her widow-

hood, there would be no need for her of parish relief or of private charity. She would always need sympathy and moral support from the district visitor or the clergyman, but with her own industry and her Club allowance she would be independent.

A widow who bravely made her way in the world after losing a most devoted and attached husband was Mary Welsh. I knew her first when she and her husband were living very happily in a small room, in a narrow court, with two little children. John Welsh had been a private in the Fusilier Guards; he was now a shoemaker, and sat all day at his window soleing and stitching. The army is dreaded by the respectable working people as an employment for their sons. A mother is in despair if she hears that her son has enlisted, or that her daughter has engaged herself to marry a soldier; yet I have found that the working men who have served in the army are vastly improved by that service. To many it becomes the best moral school of discipline that they could have.

The scholar I have already alluded to, says his page boy is a gentleman. I can well say that Mary Welsh had all the qualities of a lady. I have never met with more delicacy of feeling, refinement of thought, and quick perception of the feelings of others than in her. She has the most gracious way of receiving services rendered her, and of refusing gifts when not needed. How much do we miss in English people that quality, both in rich and poor, which the Italians have so essentially of gracefully as well as of gratefully receiving kindnesses.

After I had known the Welshs a year or two, John became ill, and soon fell into a decline. He was fifteen months off his work, and during that time he received from his Club fourteen shillings a week. Often has Mary refused any assistance I offered her, saying she could quite manage with the fourteen shillings a week and her knitting, and she knew that there were many I went to who were poorer than she was and who wanted more help. It was only when I brought her some jelly or pudding, that she

could not make for herself, and that she knew would tempt her sick husband that she would then gratefully accept it.

Here, again, let me pause, and say how mistaken is that hard and fast line which says that no charitable relief must be given at any time to the poor. I heard lately of a message being sent to a lady past seventy, who must have had some experience of the world, and known that sympathy goes for something in making life easier. Well! the message, which came from one imbued with most rigid notions of political economy was, that if anything more were given to a certain poor woman, she would no longer be allowed to remain in the house she was then living in. The present that had been sent by this kind-hearted friend was five shillings a week, during the time the woman was laid up in her confinement. The lady explained that the present was sent because the poor woman had been her housemaid, and not to encourage the occasional drinking of the husband, but no such plea availed: and the tenants had to leave the room. Do we

not all know when we have the care of a sick person, how gratefully we accept a dish from another?—some friend whose cook is perhaps better than our own, and who may please the fastidious taste of the invalid. Are we not made happier ourselves by the flowers our friends will give us? Are not the nosegays that come from them, far sweeter than any we can buy? Are not our lives made brighter by the knowledge that we are often in their thoughts?

Why therefore should the poor be deprived of the outcome of friendship which is such a joy to ourselves. Let us not by visiting pauperize them, giving indiscriminately weekly doles of soup and meat tickets, supplying often the want that would not exist but for the intemperance and improvidence of the husband or wife. But when this is not the case let us give generously, as well as wisely.

And though Mary Welsh refused anything from me but what would gratify the sick man's taste, she often told me how much he cared for my visits. I left town for two months,

and on my return found him much worse: he was greatly troubled and distressed at the thoughts of leaving his wife he loved so tenderly without a friend. For nine weeks she had sat up night after night by his bedside, as he could not get even a few moments sleep unless his hand was in hers. Seeing his trouble, I one day said to him, "You need not trouble about Mary, I will be a friend to her." From that day she told me that all care passed from him, as he trusted entirely to the promise I made him. She has looked upon me since as a friend, and adviser in all things, from laying in a stock of coals for the winter, to the rejection of well-to-do suitors, who came time after time to ask her in marriage. For she is one of those women who, in whatever station of life they may be, will be loved with devotion and respect. She has a quiet gentle manner, she seems ever in repose, and calm, and yet through all this you perceive the latent power, that will overcome the greatest obstacles for the sake of love or duty.

And this woman endured much physically

after the death of her husband. Though only the wife of a shoe-maker, she had never worked hard or undergone fatigue. Before she married, she had been in service with a lady who had valued her so much, that she had on dying left her £50. After her marriage her husband, who was a good workman, earned enough to leave her nothing to do, but to care for him and the children. She was perfect in his eyes, everything she did was right. He would buy her clothes, trinkets, any thing that he thought would please her. He had been of that class so often miscalled "rude and brutal soldiers," and yet he could find no pleasure in any amusement that she could not share with him. He was as faithful to her in life as she has been to him both in life and in death.

When a rich suitor came, who would with joy have given her instead of a small room in a court, a comfortable home and a well-furnished house, where instead of having to do rough work which hardened her hands, she would have sat at ease with a servant to work

for her, she refused it all, saying she loved her dead husband too much to put any one in his place. I daresay many who read this book will doubt the truth of some of my stories, —will say they are sensational and highly-coloured. I can only repeat it that with the exception of having changed the names of all the persons I speak of, every word is true. There is more poetry and romance, as I have said, in the lives of the poor than any one passing through those dirty streets, and looking on the careworn and often joyless faces of the inhabitants would imagine.

On Sundays, when her work was over, Mary Welsh would go out with her two little girls, neatly and nicely dressed. Once she went to hear Spurgeon, and next to her sat a lady, who offered her a hymn book. This lending of hymn books in church I have seen mentioned in a novel as an oft-recurring incident that may lead to very important results. So it was in this case, for as Mary left the chapel, the lady began to talk to her, and seemed

interested in her little girls, and asked them all to come the following Sunday to tea with her at Brixton. Mrs. Welsh accepted the invitation. A friendship sprang up, and from this time she and her children spent many Sundays with her new friend. She met there a retired naval officer, who before long wanted to marry her, but her heart was still with her husband, and she would put none in his place.

Another suitor was a man who owned two or three houses, who had seen her in a friend's house after her marriage; but from her pretty face, and youthful appearance and being spoken of always by her friends as a girl, had not known she was married till he had fallen in love with her. He then left off seeing her, and married a woman whom he said was like her. She had died, and as soon as he heard that Mary's husband was also dead, he had come to her and entreated to be allowed to think of her and to hope for a favourable answer at however distant a time, saying he

had come thus early only because he feared others might be before him. But his devotion was unavailing.

Shall I be believed if I tell of a third suitor, a German, whose acquaintance she also made at a friend's house, a tradesman and his wife, who have been good friends to her, not giving her anything, but counselling and encouraging her. Well! this last suitor, anxious to win her consent, sent her photograph to his parents in Germany, and met from them with a ready approval; but her consent he has not yet got. He has a property in Alsace that he has lately inherited, and entreats her to share it with him and to live in comfort on £1,500 a year; but no, she still refuses! though she says that perhaps when her little girls are grown up she might think of it. And what is her daily toil that she prefers to these riches as compared to her poverty? Why, hard scrubbing, daily walks to and fro to her work, often in wet and cold, hastily-prepared meals, and a small room, which she will not leave, for there she knew

the greatest of all happiness—that of having a devoted, loving husband.

On all these occasions she has come to ask my advice. What it was I will not tell, and should another district visitor be consulted in a similar case, my experience would not help them in such a difficult question. My intercourse with Mrs. Welsh was that of friendship fulfilling a death-bed promise. She had had a provident husband and needed no assistance.

I have, in speaking of parish relief, referred hitherto only to the case of widows, of the wisdom of relieving them outside the workhouse, if they are well conducted, I have no doubt; it saves the children from the contamination of mixing with many idle and worthless persons, leaves them to the all-important influence of a good mother, and fosters in them independence of character.

But with regard to the aged out-door paupers, though I see what a boon it is to them to receive their two and sixpence a week, their bread and their meat, how when by doing a little

work themselves, and helped by some charity, they seem often to be happier in a small garret than in the large halls of the work-house; still, if no aged person was to receive out-door relief, more provisions would be made for old age. Children would more generally support their parents, and not endeavour to shirk this duty. It seems hard to refuse a little help to the old, and I would continue it where it has been given, but put no new cases of out-door relief for the aged on the Relieving officers' books, offering them instead the House if they cannot keep themselves, or be kept by their friends outside. There might be an exception to this rule on rare occasions, for instance, when the mother is dead, and the grandmother is of use in bringing up a young family, or when the old husband is permanently afflicted, and the aged wife can yet work for her bread. The parish relief should be, I think, like private charity, bountiful when the distress is from unforeseen illness, or from the death of the father, and when there will be a

chance, by giving continuously, of restoring a man, woman, or family, to independence, the condition that is to be desired for all the poor.

Let the district visitor be their friend, not their enemy; which he would be, were he to teach them to depend upon charity or on parish relief.

CHAPTER VII.

HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS.

THERE are so many homes and institutions in London, supported by the bountiful gifts of the charitable, and they are so valuable to the district visitor that I will mention some the beneficial work of which I have practically experienced, and whose worth I have been able to test. The hospitals and dispensaries are easy of access to the poor who are so well treated there, that it is almost impossible to make them see that they should not be entirely dependent on charity for their medical treatment; and I could not convince them that they ought to belong to provident dispensaries, as they can without difficulty get orders, for them and also for

hospitals. Even for confinements the poor can easily obtain midwives' orders from the lying-in hospitals if they can but bring their marriage certificate, and many women are attended from these institutions, whose husbands are quite in a position to pay a fee.

Formerly, many persons used to apply at the workhouse for an order for a midwife, but latterly, owing to the husbands being called upon to pay the necessary fee, sometimes by instalments of only a shilling a week, if poverty is pleaded, there are fewer applications, and it may be hoped, that in time the working man will feel it a discredit to apply for parish relief of this nature. If out-patients at hospitals were uniformly made to pay something, however trifling, it would be an advantage to themselves, and a help to the hospital, and those who are really destitute would get an order from the Relieving officer, for the parish dispensary.

Many patients I have known have gone to the new hospital, for women, in 222, Marylebone

Road, where Mrs. Garrett Anderson, and other women with medical degrees are the physicians. There the out-patients pay sixpence the first visit, and twopence each succeeding one, and never has the slightest difficulty been made to this payment. In the case of those who are quite destitute, and unable to leave their homes, the parish doctor will come if applied for through the relieving officer, and I must say, with regard to the one I am acquainted with, that though his work is hard and unremunerative, I hear him spoken of always by the poor he visits, with extreme gratitude, both for his skill, and for his unvarying kindness.

There is another form of medical relief called the medical mission. It receives a good deal of support, and at first I thought the combined work of healing and teaching might be successful; but I do not find much spiritual good resulting from it, and it is a great loss of time to the poor woman to have to wait an hour for her medicine whilst she is listening to a religious discourse. Besides it is a system

that is very likely to promote cant among the patients.

Not only do the poor get their doctor gratis, but they can be nursed without payment from that admirable institution of nurses in Bloomsbury Square, where ladies trained in hospitals are sent out to the poor.

I have seen the practical working of these nurses in several cases, and cannot sufficiently express my admiration for the way in which they attend on their patients. Two years ago I often met one of them who was attending a poor woman who lay for months in bed with a tumour and with dropsy. Day after day this lady came. There in a small room with the door opening on to the court, have I often seen her in the brown holland gown and black bonnet with blue ribbons, the costume of these nurses, washing and dressing the sores of her charge. The sick woman lay on a bed which nearly filled their one room, so that the nurse could with difficulty pass by the husband, who was always at his bench turning old shoes into

new ones, that curious trade by which the so-called "resurrectionist" produces shoes outwardly whole, but which soon fall to pieces. The traveller to the Great Northern will see samples of these "resurrections" in the endless rows of shoes put out on the pavement in front of many of the houses in Dudley Street.

The sick woman was too ill to be moved to a hospital, the doctor said it might kill her, and there she had to lie in all her agonising pain and breathless nights for all the spring and summer, soothed though and comforted by the daily visits of the nurse.

In another case I asked for a nurse to attend on a poor woman with a gathering who was quite alone with her infant; her husband, a printer, having gone to Croydon for work and she was to follow when they could borrow money enough to move. The nurse came here also daily, and seeing how ill and suffering her patient was, told her not to get up before she came in the morning

when she would herself light the fire and prepare the breakfast.

These nurses will always come to any one they are told of who wants nursing if within a radius of three miles from the central home, and I cannot, as I said before, sufficiently praise them. No hospital nurse has any work as painful, and often disgusting and fatiguing as that which is done by these good ladies, and certainly if they don't preach and probe into the souls of the sick, their actions must preach for them. A hospital nurse will work in clean well-ventilated wards with every appliance at hand. What a contrast to the dirty close rooms where these nurses have to carry on their works of mercy! Should any one long to nurse the sick and be unable to do so, let him help this institution and he will know that the work of nursing is being well done. It has been much brought forward by the Duke of Westminster, who seems always foremost in trying to promote the welfare of the working class, whether it be in

nursing institutions, coffee palaces, drinking fountains, or window gardening.

Before leaving the subject of the sick, I must mention Convalescent Hospitals. They are considered of such importance to the hospital patients that some have their own convalescent home, as for instance St. George's, and St. Bartholomew's, and the Hospital for Children in Ormond Street, and no doubt many others. But many of the poor are ill in their own houses, and are not hospital patients and these cannot shake off their weakness till they have had fresh country air.

I know much of the great benefit that is derived from these hospitals, as I have for three years had the advantage of being able to send patients to the Eastbourne All Saints' and to the St. Andrew's Clewer Convalescent Hospitals. In each of these the nursing is done by Sisters of the two different orders.

Two permanent beds are given to me by a most generous friend, who, by her great liberality has given a fresh start in life to many a man,

woman, and child. In looking over the list of patients I keep for her, I see amongst the fifty I have sent many who, but for her help, would not have regained their health and power of earning a living. In the close rooms, and with the insufficient food, they have at home, the sick poor cannot regain any vigour. Many a sick person comes back not only cured in body but also in spirit by the loving, tender, skilful care of these good Sisters.

In this one respect the poor are better off than the rich, for they are nursed by ladies who have besides their own natural refinement and education, trained and practised skill, and a religious feeling which makes their labour one of love. Amongst the patients I have sent, I will mention Kate. She was a tall pretty girl of sixteen, an envelope folder, where machinery was not used and where she sat all day from nine to seven folding envelopes, sometimes accomplishing as many as 6,000 in a day, getting for that work nine shillings a week. This wearying work, for ever bending over the table

in one position, was so hurtful to her that she fell ill and was near dying. As soon as she was fit to travel she went to Eastbourne, and spent six weeks there coming back bright and strong. I had to insist on her not returning, as she intended doing, to the same occupation. The doctor had forbidden her to follow it any more, but, with the usual helplessness of the poor, she said she saw no other means of earning a living. She is now learning millinery, a light employment that will not injure her health.

There was another woman I sent, who, but for a London Hospital, would have died, and but for Eastbourne Convalescent Hospital would have been unable to go to work again. Mary Porter has a sick husband at home, so on her falls the responsibility of earning enough to keep herself, husband, and children, with the assistance of what is earned by two boys at home. For two years she has worked at a large preserving manufactory (not Crosse and Blackwell's) and she has been thankful to secure two

shillings a day. But the labour is hard for a woman who has never before done rough work. She was in comfortable circumstances before her marriage—the daughter of a publican. Her husband earned good wages, and all went well till he fell through an open trap into a cellar and injured his leg.

For a year he received ten shillings a week from his employers, and from his club ten more. With this he was comfortable, but the leg got no better, nor will it ever be cured; and of course he could not be helped permanently, so the brave wife has pickled, preserved, and helped to load carts, and so kept the home together. The hard work that this woman has undergone is wonderful. She has often been employed with four others to carry eighty jars of two gallons weight up two flights of stairs; at other times they have had to unload from carts and carry a long distance two hundred large sugar loaves, called "tiddlers," or have had to carry upstairs 18 lb.-pots of preserves. With this work she grew thinner and weaker month

by month, till at last she had such an attack of hæmorrhage that she was taken to the hospital, and was not expected to live. However, the good care, quiet, and food she got there enabled her to come out alive,—but a pale shadow that could not have pickled and preserved. Then came into operation the health-giving effect of the sea-air, the excellent food, and the good nursing of the Eastbourne Convalescent Hospital. She was there four weeks, and is now again, pickling, preserving, and loading.

Another case was Phœbe Painter: she was not ill from hard work, but from overcrowding. Her parents are dead, and she is the eldest of the family,—having two brothers of eighteen and sixteen and a sister of twenty, who all live at home and work out. They have two rooms: one is a kitchen, where they may not sleep—the law fortunately forbids that, as it is underground, without a sufficient area; but the bedroom of the four contains two beds, leaving barely space enough to pass up from the door to the fireplace, and here Phœbe may sometimes

have to sit for days too ill to move. She has a heart complaint, and must often pass long nights propped up in bed. She is a skilful embroideress, a gentle and quiet girl. Last year, she went to Clewer and spent six weeks there in the summer, sitting out with her work in that lovely garden, and came home strengthened.

Working boys I have sent, who were getting weaker and weaker without any apparent cause, and falling off from their work; but this is often only the result of the unhealthy houses, the poor food, and the long hours of work. In three cases I have sent boys in this condition to the Convalescent Hospital, and it has no doubt prevented the debility attacking some organ which might have proved fatal, and the country air has enabled them to come back to do their work briskly and cheerfully. Besides these two beautiful hospitals, that appear like Paradise to the patients, I have sent many children to Mrs. Dalton's Cottage Home at Little Burstead in Essex. This kind lady takes in four children at a time from London hospitals

and keeps them there a month. The little ones run about all day in the fields, and come back rosy and fat.

When there was fever in the hospital and no children could be sent to her, or from whatever cause there may have been a vacancy, I have had a letter from Mrs. Dalton saying I might send two sick children to her in a day or two, and so many suffering little ones are there at all times, that I have thankfully accepted the kind offer and sent some down.

There are many Homes of various kinds that the district visitor should know of for the different wants of the poor. There is the Home in 19, Pratt Street, Lambeth, that I have mentioned in the case of Jenny Ash, in connection with the Refuge and Reformatory Union; and none who want to shelter any poor homeless girl can do better than take her to Mrs. Williams; there she will be seen by the ladies looking after this house, and be sent to Streatham or any other place suited to the girl's case.

Another kind of home in connection with this

Union is the small house where the good woman who lives in it is a missionary, who wanders about the town seeking whom she can rescue and bring back to a haven of safety. There are about eight of these small Homes in London, which are meant for the temporary reception of three or four women at a time. I found the great use of one of these in the case of Sarah Pinch, a poor girl of sixteen. I had observed her for some time sitting always by the fire in a room where I often went to look after a sick child, whose mother was sometimes out at work, and I would then speak to Sarah; but she seemed stupefied and would hardly answer me. At last I inquired about her, and found out that her mother, who was a drunken costermonger, had three weeks ago turned the girl out of her room, after beating her very cruelly; and that since then she had not been allowed to return to it. During that time the girl had slept on the staircase of the house where her mother lived, and the neighbours, who were sorry for her, had given her scraps of food. During the day the

kind woman in whose room I found her, had let her sit by the fire, but she was anxious that the mother should not hear of this act of charity, on her part, as she was known to be a violent, fighting woman.

The girl appeared morose, sullen, and angry. Could I wonder at this? I tried, by speaking kindly, to have some effect upon her, and I offered to take her away with me to a Home. It was some days before she made up her mind to accept my offer, but did so at last. The kind friend gave her an old shawl, and I got her a hat, and we sallied forth when we knew the mother was safe at her fruit stall. I took her to Mrs. Cappin, who had one of these small Homes I have described. After spending three days there, she went to 11, Powis Place, Great Ormond Street, a Home for Friendless Girls, and there she remained a year, giving but little trouble considering that by her swearing and violence, she had been the terror of the children in her own neighbourhood, her mother's only lessons having been those of evil. After a time, Sarah

seemed improving, and was glad to see me, and anxious to do better; but a year is too short a time to iradicate so much wickedness.

The Home in Powis Place is very well managed by a committee of ladies, but unfortunately, Sarah was soon past the age at which the girls are allowed to remain there. A place was found for her in service. She did well for a year, then left, and after various changes and much trouble taken about her, she returned to some relation in a low court about the Dials. She had no longer the wish to reform, and is now lost in the whirlpool of those parts.

I have already mentioned the Home in Charlotte Street, to which Libbie went. A most perfect home, with a matron, Mrs. Pearson, who is also the mother, the friend, and the adviser of these poor girls. The management of this Home is also in the hands of a committee; but the chief care devolves on Miss Bell, the sister of W. Bell, who has brought to such perfection the Home for Boys, in Regent's Park.

Latterly, a house has been taken for six weeks each summer, by the sea-side, and all the girls have gone there in three relays, improving their health, strength, and diminishing their consumption of cod-liver oil at home.

Another Home of the same nature, of which I also experienced the benefit, is Lady Agnes Wood's School in Devonshire, where she takes in twenty-five girls, for a payment each of £8, or £10 a year, according to the age of the girl. An orphan went there from the Dials, and she has turned out a good servant, and a most accomplished needlewoman. This little girl was left on her mother's death with three brothers, whose care for her was not to be depended on, for when she travelled down to Devonshire she was disfigured with a tremendous black eye, given to her by one of her brothers. This Home has all the picturesque beauty of the neighbourhood of Powderham Castle, and the little girls have the pleasure of walking every Sunday, through the beautiful park to the church, neatly dressed in brown stuff frocks and red cloaks.

One more Home for girls I shall mention, as I was a long time before I found what I wanted for the peculiar case of Rose Burney. Children are often brought before the magistrate by their parents, saying they cannot keep them from stealing, and asking him to punish them. The magistrate is the adviser, as well as the judge, of many a poor man and woman, and from many magistrates will the sufferer get a sympathetic hearing.

Rose Burney was a pretty child of eleven, and had she not had a good and careful mother, might have appeared some day in the police-court, bringing disgrace into the home of a respectable working man, and casting a slur on the reputation of the sisters who were already started in a position of life, where the character of the relations was of great importance. Rose had been detected in stealing pennies from her mother, her brothers, and sisters, at different times. She had been sent to borrow a dish from a poor widow, and had stolen some halfpence there. She was accused, though it could not be

proved, of stealing some more pennies from her teacher's desk.

The mother was in despair, and told me she would do anything to cure the child. She had tried all means she could think of; she had beaten her, kept her short of food, giving it to her apart from the others, and had not allowed her to leave the house for three weeks at a time; but the child was always repeating the same offence. If sent with sixpence, for a certain sort of potatoes, she would bring back some that cost fourpence, spending the remainder for herself. And she stole this money always for the same purpose,—for sweets, for ices, for sherbet, for stewed eels, and for many other delicacies that are temptingly exposed on barrows, or in shop windows.

It was very long before I found a place to send her to; but I wish to say how admirable a Home for that purpose is the School of Discipline, Queen's Road, Chelsea. Here Rose stayed for two years, her mother taking in extra washing to be able to pay regularly the four

shillings a week, for which the Committee consented to take in Rose. She has now come home quite cured of her evil propensity, having been trusted at school with money, and her mother is satisfied as to the good principles her child now has, and is very grateful to the School of Discipline.

I have hitherto spoken only of Homes for Girls. I will now tell of two for boys, which are most efficient in the work they do, and admirably managed by committees of gentlemen. The Newport Market Industrial School consists of sixty boys from the ages of ten to fourteen. The Superintendent, Mr. Ramsden, was a sergeant in the 16th Regiment, and knows how to maintain strict discipline. The boys have regular drill and are taught music by a band-master. Twenty were sent last year into military bands, and there are upwards of 110 boys from this school now in different regiments. Those who have no musical talent are placed either in service or at trades. There is a resident school-master; six hours a day are given

to school and industrial work and instrumental practice. They have out-door exercise every day, and anyone living in the West End may often see this small regiment of boys marching briskly through the parks. They are dressed in fustian trousers, blue serge jerseys, and dark blue felt caps. They do all the industrial work of their school,—they scrub the floors, help to cook the dinner, and make their beds.

A look at the dormitory will show with what cleanliness and neatness their work is done. They have small iron beds, and in the daytime the sheets and the red blankets and blue counterpanes are tightly rolled up at the head of the bed, giving a most cheerful effect to the large room. The good work this school does can be shown by the excellent behaviour of the boys after they have left, and the position in life that many of them now occupy. So convinced are the boys of the real interest the Superintendent, Mr. Ramsden, takes in their welfare, that he is constantly receiving visits

from old boys, or letters to tell him how they are getting on.

I once got the committee to take in a poor half-starved boy of eleven. His father had lately died at the hospital, after an illness of some months. The widow was a helpless woman, and got cheated by a man who had worked for her husband, who was a shoe-maker. She was a tailoress. I helped her very much for some time and got her work, and she might have done well had she not taken to drink.

The poor little boy, who looked as if he would never grow up, was taken from this miserable home into the Newport Market School; there he was for two years, till he one day absconded, and it was supposed his mother had wiled him away, and we heard no more of Toms or his mother. I was speaking to the Superintendent about this boy when he left, and said how disheartening it was to feel that all the teaching and training would be lost upon him, from his having returned to a drunken mother, to be dragged down into misery. Mr. Ramsden

said, "I never despair; we find that these boys will often return to us years later, and say that they owe all they have to the teaching and care they received here."

These words, spoken five years ago, I found true a few weeks back. I was told that a young man called Toms wanted to see me. The wretched little boy had grown into a respectable looking, well-dressed young man. He told me that he had come up to town for a night from Brighton, where he was earning eighteen shillings a week as an improver in tailoring, and in another year would get much higher wages. He had been to see the Superintendent of his former school, to tell him how well he was getting on, and on asking for me, Mr. Ramsden had bid him call, as he knew I should be glad to see his improvement.

After leaving the school Toms had lived in wretchedness with his mother for a year, till she died; he had then got work under a tailor in London; but two years ago, he felt he was getting mixed up with bad companions, so he

went off to Brighton where he knew no one. He said to me, "Brighton is as bad a place as London, but there I only know two chaps in all the town." He spoke with gratitude of the school, and said he went every Sunday to church, and had improved himself in reading. What better proof can we have of the efficiency of a school than when the teaching will bring forth such fruit years after?

As I have said, there are many romantic stories to be met with amongst the poor. A very sad one was that of Julian Pruyn; his mother had been governess, and had left him, when a baby, in the care of a respectable old couple at Richmond. She had gone abroad with his father, a Scotch gentleman, and the last that was heard of them was, that they had both thrown themselves together into the Lake of Garda. When this came to the knowledge of the old couple, they had got to love the little child and kept him with them as their own; but when the old man died, the widow could no longer support the boy, and hearing of this Home, she brought

him to it, and he was admitted. He is now in America, having gone there as page to a lady I know.

The other Home I would mention is St. Andrew's Home for Working Boys in Dean Street. Its object is to provide a respectable Home for boys from thirteen to eighteen, who have no parents and who would be exposed, like poor Toms, to the dangers of bad companions.

> "Who quit a world where strong temptations try,
> And since 'tis hard to combat, learn to fly."

In two cases boys have been admitted on my recommendation: one, George Mahoney, whose grandmother had brought him up, and had asked me on her death-bed to look after the boy. He was apprenticed to a first-class cabinet-maker: went at once into the Home, where he stayed till he was over eighteen years of age; being a well-conducted, steady boy. The other boy I got in was one I shall refer to later as having been at the night-school.

Another romantic story is connected with this Home. A boy of fifteen had been there a year and a half, when it came to the knowledge of one of the committee that Arthur was the son of a gentleman. His father, of a well-known Irish family, had placed him in a school at Hampstead, and two years after had left England, it was supposed, with a lady, and no more was heard of him. Arthur's mother died, and the schoolmaster kept the boy for some months, whilst receiving no payment for him; then seeing no chance of any friends appearing, he brought the boy to London, found him a place with a jeweller, and put him into this Home. The boy never said where he came from, and made no friends amongst his companions; he was looked upon as a strange, curious-tempered lad by the managers, and was nicknamed "gentleman Arthur" by the boys in the Home. Strange to say, six weeks after he had been left in Dean Street the schoolmaster who brought him there died, and there was no link connecting him with his former life apparent

to those in the Home. But often on a Sunday the boy went up to Hampstead to a gentleman he had known there, so keeping up with his former associates unknown to his present ones. He has now left the St. Andrew's Home, and is in a better position of life, where he will probably do well.

A night-school is provided for these boys three times a week, they have a boat on the river, and several times I have been rowed up to Kew in the *Merry Andrew.* Three of the gentlemen composing the Committee of Management are more particularly occupied with the boys, visiting the Home daily, and on Sundays taking them to church, marking down their names at dinner on that day, and noticing very particularly any untidiness of dress, or want of cleanliness. At the three spring and summer Bank holidays they take the boys on some excursion, lasting from mid-day Saturday to Monday night. Sometimes they will row up the river, leaving their boat each succeeding Saturday for two or three weeks some miles higher up the river, and

finally rowing down the last time from Windsor or Hampton Court. They have also gone by train to Margate and to Hayling Island, boys and gentlemen sleeping in a barn for two nights, and spending the day in bathing repeatedly in the sea. In the winter they get up acting for St. Andrew's Day, and most amusing plays have been performed very effectively by them. The work these gentlemen do for the boys is most excellent, teaching them to be manly and self-dependent, and their refining influence can be seen by the good manners of the boys. As for the details of management, the payments of the boys, &c., I need not go into them, for anyone who is interested in it should go and see for himself the way the Home in 71, Dean Street is managed.

In order to show the working of the different societies for relief, I will take the case of Mrs. Malcolm and her family. She has had a sick husband unable to work for nearly two years, and for ten months she lived upon needlework and on the pawnbroker.

Malcolm had been a gun-maker; when he married he was at Enfield earning four or five pounds a week. These wages are very high, but after an order is completed there may be two or three months when the men are without work, and the savings must then be largely drawn upon. Malcolm was a saving man, and they led a happy, comfortable life; he had enough to keep his wife and children well and also to lay by. She had never done her own washing before his illness came on, and always had a girl to mind the baby, which gives an idea of the comfort they lived in.

From Enfield they went to Birmingham and after nine years of marriage his rheumatism began. At first it came on in attacks severe but short, he thought he would be better in London, and they all moved up two years ago; but whether from coming into a house that was damp, or whether it was the natural progress of the disease, he has been too ill since then to do a day's work. Malcolm had not been able to join a club, as the doctor would

not pass him. Acute rheumatism came on soon after coming to London so badly that he was taken in at King's College Hospital. They had good clothes by them, good furniture, some articles of value, and money saved. On these things they lived for months by pawning them. For instance, Mrs. Malcolm's wedding-ring, which had cost thirty-five shillings, they put in for seventeen and sixpence. All the pawn tickets have run out, only the wedding-ring remains, for which she has paid a heavy interest, and has to call occasionally on the pawnbroker to beg him to keep it for her as better times she tells him are coming, and she will be able to redeem it. At last in November, after many months of illness, the room was bare, the savings were used up, work was slack, the husband was in the hospital, and there were three children at home and another coming.

In despair she went to a lady whom she did not know, but had heard of. The case was inquired into. It had been brought before the Charity Organisation Society some months

previously by the clergyman of her parish; but the answer that had been given was that the case could not be relieved, though all the references were satisfactory, as it would probably be a permanent one from the nature of the husband's illness of chronic rheumatism. Mrs Malcolm is a well-educated, clever, sensible woman, with great courage and a pleasant manner, and besides all this she has the best of passports, a pretty, bright face, with an intelligent countenance, which has helped her considerably in all her troubles in making her way with strangers.

She was assisted for some time whilst her husband was in the hospital, with needlework and food tickets, but with these she had but a bare existence. One day she said that if only she were to become a midwife, she could keep her family by her own earnings.

Inquiries were made, and by means of a loan of £10 10*s.* she was able to attend a class held by a physician for the purpose of training midwives. She had to attend lectures

on three evenings in the week, of two hours in length, and she had to write them out at home. Her first course, which began in December, was not finished till June, owing to her having been absent for some time during her own confinement. She then had her pupil cases to get up, that is attending on the women in their own houses, and bringing an account of each case in writing to the lecturer. She had twenty-nine to report upon, and began her second course of lectures in October, receiving her diploma last November. She then got appointed to the Royal Maternity Charity, and since that has been appointed to one of the hospitals, and is to receive five shillings a case. She is now earning at the rate of fifteen shillings a week, but will not be paid before the quarter-day. Thus there is the certainty of her being able in time not only to keep her family in comfort, but to pay back what has been lent to her.

And for all these long months—I can testify to fifteen of them—Mrs. Malcolm has struggled

and fought, and conquered in the hard battle of life. She had relief from different societies, and in various ways which I shall mention; but what has she not undergone of privation and anxiety during that time!

Her husband has been three times in the hospital, for two or three months at a time, often so ill that the doctors doubted if he would recover. Then when better he has been discharged, has come home to very spare and poor living, has walked about looking for work till the rheumatism has come back in his knees and feet, and he has been at home in bed for weeks and weeks. Often has Mrs. Malcolm been unable to get even the scantiest allowance of food for herself and children and husband when he was at home.

When she was confined he was in the hospital, she was five weeks behind with her rent. The landlady took this opportunity of putting in the brokers, which means that a broker's man sits day and night in the room of the tenant, and must be kept in food at the tenant's ex-

pense. So inhuman did even the broker consider this conduct that he got the landlady to make arrangements in consideration of twenty-two shillings being paid down, which Mrs. Malcolm got from some friends.

And with all these anxieties, want of work, want of food, a sick husband, whom she loves tenderly, no means, and hard work to earn a shilling or two yet for her to be able to make the intellectual effort of attending to lectures, of writing them out, and finally of passing a satisfactory examination seems to me marvellous.

At the time of her confinement she received from the parish for three weeks two shillings and sixpence, with three pounds of bread, and beef-tea for the first week she was laid up. From the Relief of Distress Society she had at another time five shillings a week for four weeks. From the Charity Organisation Society she had some relief for a few weeks in the way of tickets; and again, later, from Mr. Peake's fund she got money for boots for the

children to go to school. She was also helped with a few dinner tickets for a short time by the clergyman of the parish she has now left.

But what has helped her mostly in the way of tickets has been those from Ham Yard, out of Windmill Street, where stands that good hospice where the homeless may sometimes find a bed, and where the starving can, by presenting a ticket, get soup and bread. Mrs. Malcolm has had as many as four of these tickets a week when receiving no other relief, and has been most grateful for the excellent pieces of bread given to her, which are sent to the hospice from many of the clubs in Pall Mall and St. James's Street.

The committees who manage these clubs, and allow of the disposal of the broken bread in this way, should know what a boon and even luxury it is to the starving to get bread of this sort, and they might perhaps allow still more of the food that is left uneaten to be sent to Ham Yard. In the best managed and the highest establishment in our country, a certain

number of sick persons recommended by the clergyman are the regular recipients of this kind of bounty; and in many other houses the same thing might be done if the master or mistress would give a thought to this subject.

Besides the help from the societies I have mentioned, Mrs. Malcolm had clothes and food given to her by the district visitor of her parish. Work was also procured for her, and she is now fortunately under a landlord who has confidence in her success, and feels that there is no danger in allowing arrears of rent, as it will ultimately be paid.

In addition to the fifteen shillings a week she now makes by work for the Hospital, she has promises of private cases which will bring her in each ten shillings or perhaps more. Throughout all these troubles she has been cheerful and hopeful. Only once did she say, "God must have been very angry with me to punish me so much," forgetting that God must have led her to call on the stranger who was able to befriend her.

Before leaving the subject of relief, I would mention many things that a district visitor should possess in order to lend to the poor in times of sickness. I have found an old-fashioned, high-backed arm-chair that was given to me for lending the greatest comfort to many a sufferer in his last days. It has also given rest to the weary watcher at night—the rest that is so needed when the night's watching has to be followed by the day's toil. Then the loan of the bag of clothes for the poor woman in her confinement, the drinking-cup so needful in great weakness, the dressing-gown for the sick man who may sit up for an hour or two before the fire, the sheets, that will enable the friends to keep the fevered bed clean; and, lastly, not the loan, but the gift, of the old night-gown or shirt with which the dead may be put decently into the coffin: the substitute for the winding sheet being often difficult to get amongst the very poorest. During illness there should, if possible, be no stint of relief, given, it is true, in kind, and not in money.

Milk can be ordered at the shop, a pint or a quart a day, and wine can be got at the wine merchant's at a small price compared to what the poor have to pay when they send for it to the public-house. They are charged there sixpence for a glass of wine so adulterated that the sick man can often not touch it. Liebig's extract of meat, arrowroot, raspberry vinegar, and many other things can be given to relieve the sufferings of the sick and dying. It may need some experience to know where we should give and what cases we should relieve; but once we feel satisfied that we are right in relieving, we can in many ways lessen the sufferings of the poor.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLERGY AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

IN speaking of the different ways of visiting the poor in London, I referred to the efficiency of district visiting under the authority of the clergyman. Let me explain wherein lies the advantage of this system.

The clergyman will be the fountain head of most of the charities of the neighbourhood,—he will often be the first who is applied to in cases of distress or sickness. He will have a general knowledge of the inhabitants of his parish, of their condition in life, and of their wants, and he will be able to tell the visitor where, or in what way his work will be of most value. "In a well-organised parish there will be districts allotted to each curate, and

under him there will be one or more district visitors, who will report to him cases needing his attention.

It is impossible in London for the clergyman to become acquainted by himself with all the poor and the sick who may want him. For instance, take a parish of 6,000 persons, mostly working people; though the area on which they live may be small, yet the number of families will be very great and the clergyman's time will be fully taken up in visiting the sick who are pointed out to him. Besides the want of time which will prevent a clergyman from searching out for himself those even of his own congregation, whom he would wish to see, he will be met with another difficulty, which consists in the varieties of religion and of denominations that exist in a London parish. In many houses he would not be welcome, and he would feel himself an intruder.

Many clergymen consider that in order to make their spiritual teaching more effectual, it is important that their visits should not be

associated with relief, that they should not have to give a shilling to-day or to-morrow a ticket. They will see that the sick person has all that he needs when it can be obtained from the parochial charities; but it will be left to the visitor to administer the relief. More or less work can be allotted to each person. Some may undertake but two or three houses, others may have time to visit in one or more streets, and to find out those who may require the clergyman's attention. Whilst other workers, who would not feel equal to taking the initiative, may be told of a few cases of sickness either temporary or permanent, where their kindly visits can do much to soften the sorrows of illness.

In one of the West End parishes with which I am acquainted, a certain number of ladies are appointed for the special purpose of looking after poor women in their confinements. The clergyman sends to these ladies the names of those whom he wishes to have visited, and to whom special comforts may very properly be given.

The advantage of having these differently organised branches of work is, that the visitor will only undertake that which he feels equal to perform. And should he only have leisure or inclination to visit two or three sick persons it will still be a help to the over-strained work of the clergyman of a large and poor parish.

In most parishes there are weekly or monthly meetings, to which all the visitors will come, and bring a report of their work to the clergyman, giving him the number of visits they have made, the relief they have given, and explaining why that relief was needed, and telling him of any fresh cases which need his visits or his instruction.

Tickets for soup, coals, or groceries, will be distributed to the visitors to be given to the sick. By these meetings much information may be got about the poor, that will be most useful to both the visitor and the clergy, and the latter will be able to see that the parish is not becoming pauperized by the too often indiscriminate charity of the visitor.

In many parishes there are guilds for boys and girls under the special care of the clergy, their ranks will be filled by the visitor, who will often be able to persuade this or that girl or boy to join a society which will be so useful to them.

The guilds are composed of persons joining together for their own improvement and benefit, with certain rules that they promise to observe. In many ways they resemble an ordinary club or friendly society, only in addition to the benefits in times of sickness, there is the banding together with the object of trying to lead a good life and the fact of joining one with another for the same object, tends to strengthen the good resolution of each individual. The boys and girls who have attended regularly at the Sunday School, and who leave at the age of thirteen or fourteen on going into service or trades, will often gladly join these guilds, knowing what a help they will be to them.

The poor are mostly separated from everything that is noble, cultivated, and refined; as

they walk through the streets they hear blasphemies and oaths; they see around them coarse and brutal conduct; on the one hand there is squalor and poverty, on the other shameless vice and degrading sin. They are surrounded by temptations: for the boy there is the music-hall, the theatre, and the circus, harmless in themselves, but leading to late hours, inattention to work, and unsteadiness of conduct. The girl may be attracted to the dancing-rooms—these are not harmless, and may lead to her ruin. To resist these temptations is often difficult, and nothing will so much help the young "in passing through the waves of this troublesome world" as to have a friend in the clergyman, the Sunday-school teacher, and the band-mistress.

The rules of the guilds will vary in different parishes; generally they will meet once in every week for a class of religious teaching, and they will promise to attend one Church service on Sundays. Guilds may consist of fifty or a hundred members; they will be divided into

bands of about twelve, which will each be under the special care of the band-master or mistress, whose business it is to keep a watchful care over their own band, and report if there is any infringement of the rules set down.

The Sunday Schools are much appreciated by the poor. They value them as a means of religious instruction for their children; and you will find that the parents who themselves never enter church or chapel will yet wish their children to have some Bible-teaching. Not only are these poor little ones taught at the Sunday School, but the attendance at church and school will keep them from much of the evil of the streets. I know a parish where a Church Sunday School was discontinued, and most of the children went to the Baptist School sooner than have none.

The Board Schools are let on Sundays for any denomination who wish to hold Sunday Schools; the hours of instruction are in some from six to eight in the evening. In a school I know of there is an attendance of four

hundred children, and a staff of thirty or forty teachers, all voluntary, who attend regularly. About eight or ten children sit at their desks around each teacher, listening most attentively to their instructor. A band of serious, earnest young men and women of the class of tradesmen are there, who give up their evenings, and often many of their morning hours to this work. The children have occasional treats of tea-drinking, and one grand excursion into the country every year; the expenses of the rent, gas, coals, &c., which are small, are defrayed by the Sunday School Union.

The London poor have little that is beautiful to look on, and there is nothing ennobling in their surroundings; so when the Sunday School teacher, the district visitor, and the clergyman can bring to them beauty, grandeur, or refinement, they are cultivating in them a new sense. An eminent man of letters, in giving a lecture this winter, spoke of the lowest class as "the brutalized class." It is true that some are brutalized; those who kick and beat their

wives, and who spend their earnings in public-houses; but they are the dregs, not the great bulk of working people. And is not this brutalizing caused, to a great degree, by their foul dwellings and their adulterated drinks?

The more we can bring before the children and youths of the working-classes real beauty and true nobleness of life, so shall we preserve them from this brutality, and keep them from forming part of this coarse residuum. There is much in London accessible to the poor by which their minds can be elevated, and those who are above them in position should use all means to bring them in contact with that which will give them higher aspirations, and raise them above the degrading influences of poverty.

Every Holy Innocents' Day the Dean of Westminster preaches a sermon specially to children, and two years ago I took a little band of thirty boys and girls to our most glorious abbey. There was biting sleet and cold rain that day—but nothing daunted, those

little children pattered down by Whitehall, many of them with thin coverings and worn-out shoes. There they gathered closely together under one of those beautiful arches, whilst

> "Through the long drawn aisle and fretted vault
> The pealing anthem swelled the note of praise;"

They listened attentively to the whole of the service; though the Abbey was thronged with children of all classes, I am sure that none of those who came out of richer and happier homes could have listened more eagerly than did those poor little ones, to the simple words that fell from the Dean's lips, carrying home to their parents his cheering words of encouragement, his loving admonition, and his earnest hopes for the future. Many times since then have they gone back to the Abbey, taking with them their parents or companions.

The influence that a London clergyman has over the poor in his parish depends entirely on his personal work. I believe he may be High or Low Church, but if he is seen amongst his

flock at all times, if he is known not only as the pastor who guides, but the friend who succours, if he be always at hand where there is sorrow and distress, he will then have the devoted love of many, and the respect of all. Those who have been to church will be cheered through the week by the words they have heard from him, and they will be to them a support and comfort. This is no ideal picture, for I have worked under such clergymen as I have described; if any one were ill there would be the daily visits to the sick bed from the rector or from the curate, and often have I known these visits to continue for weeks and weeks, and have seen how the sufferer was helped by them to bear patiently his many troubles. Not only did the actual visit brighten the sick man, but the expectation of the visit was a reason for getting the room tidy and clean. The poor are generally so anxious to have some one to pray and read to them when on their death-bed, that I have known cases where the clergyman was absent, and sooner than have

no one they would send for a district visitor or a class teacher, who, though strangers to themselves, they had heard of as visiting in the neighbourhood.

Any one who has worked much amongst the poor, will have seen numerous examples of the real practical effect of religious teaching. I can give no better example of this than an account of the illness and death of John Cairns, and will make use of the words of his own mother, as she wrote them for me.

"At the age of eighteen John went into the army. His father consented, as he thought his health might improve, but before he had been two years away he burst a blood-vessel. He was sent home for three months. The doctor here told him he would not recover; he had to return to Dublin, they there discharged him. He got home ten months before his death. His sufferings were very great. He never complained, but sometimes he wept, when he had been two, or, as he was once, three days unable to swallow food. I always found him very

grateful. He had been confirmed at the age of fourteen, by his own expressed wish. Some months after he caught cold, and seemed very unwell. He received an invitation to the vicarage of Mark Beech, where he was carefully tended by the vicar and his sister for six weeks: there he received lessons of true piety that he never forgot. He continued to be a communicant, and attended a young man's religious class.

"Eight days before his death he spoke about a gentleman who used to visit him, and, as he said himself, was a true friend to him. 'Surely,' said he, 'it is of such men that heaven is made up.' One day later he spoke of another visitor, and said softly, 'She said she would come again; I hope she will; she is so kind, and looks so happy, that she makes me feel happy.' Two days later, I could see he was sinking, and said, 'My dear boy, you are going to leave me.' He said, 'Only for a short time; we shall soon meet again, and oh, mother, don't fret so, think of poor Fanny! She is very good,

and most unselfish, and you know a daughter is much more to a mother than ever a son could be. See to her, mother, she looks ill. Don't trouble so much about me, for I am quite happy.' He also spoke about the boys, saying he hoped they would be good, and do well, and be kind to me.

"One morning he found he had lost the sight of one eye, but when I began to pity him he raised his hand to stop me, and said, 'Hush, mother, God has been very good to me, and if He spares me the use of the other I will be glad, if not His will be done.' He lay quite still for some time after this, and then beckoned me to him, and said, 'Tell the children to come and look at me, and kiss me, as they go out and come in; I want to see them as often as I can now.' He sent for his Sunday School teacher and told her the names of some he would like to see. Among these was a clergyman from whom he wished to receive the Holy Communion. He also asked to see a Sister of Mercy, whom he had not seen for three years.

She came, and he taking both her hands in his, said, 'Sing—"That gate was left ajar for me."' She did so, and he seemed much moved. She afterwards knelt down by his bed-side and sang three hymns, softly. When she had finished, he said, 'Dear me, how good and kind every one seems to be.' The rector came daily. On the morning of the 27th April, the day of his death, he noticed that his father and Fanny had not gone out as usual, and gravely inquired the cause. I said, 'You are not so well to-day, dear, and your father is writing to your cousin William; have you anything to say to him?' 'Yes,' he said, 'give him my love, and tell him I am going, and I feel so happy.' He went on to say 'I feel so bright this morning, as if I were going on a journey, and in a hurry to be off. I should like to see the rector; I want to thank him—I like him—I always liked him.'

"After this he could not speak plainly. He seemed aware of it, and spelt the next sentence. It was his last, for his speech was gone. He then made signals to each one of us in turns.

He raised his arms round our necks while he received our parting kiss.

"He then extended his hand to the rector, who placed it on his breast, covering it with both of his, while his tears fell fast, as if he were bending over his own son. Not very long after he looked up twice, and smiled, then passed away without a struggle.

"A short time before his death he spoke of a dream he had. He said he thought he was a boy again in the Park with his sister, and they sang together of old times, and he said he thought her voice was lovely, and it made him feel happy.

"The Rev. A. Stanton, whom he knew very well, often visited him. During one of his later visits he asked him to read,—'The hour of my departure is come.' When Mr. Stanton had to leave he embraced and kissed him, as he always did, for he loved him like a brother. A few days before his death he said, 'Don't tell my poor father how ill I am, for he takes on so much about me. When

he looks at me in the morning he heaves such a sigh.'

"He said one day, 'Fanny and you will come and see me sometimes, I know, but you must not think of me as there.' Meaning his grave.

"All the two years he was away I had a letter from him every week, and his sister often had one also."

These are the words of the mother of the young soldier: her one thought was how she could ease his suffering,—his only care was for the trouble he gave to the father, the mother, the brothers, and sister, who were waiting on him so tenderly. For their sakes he wished to go to the workhouse infirmary, but they would not part from him. They had but two rooms, for the sick man, the parents, and five children. The house was in a very narrow court, and not a ray of sun could reach the sick bed, but yet though the quarters were so close and the discomforts great, never was there a murmur from the soldier, only thankfulness for all that was done for him. Truly we have not only to

succour the poor but to admire and imitate them.

Of late years there have been occasionally what are called Mission Weeks in London, and many lives have been changed by that work.

The object of these Missions is, to leave none in ignorance of Christian teaching, to give to all the opportunity of hearing the Word preached. To accomplish this object, one or more sermons are preached daily, and every evening there is a late service and sermon, to which working men can come. To procure their attendance, hand-bills are left at each family, inviting all to come to church. I had to deliver these papers in two or three streets. I called at each room; many of the people were new to me, but all received me civilly; many said they did not care for such things, but others seemed pleased at being spoken to, and promised to come. The fault found with these Missions is, that the good effect is so transitory that it is mere excitement and bears no fruit. But I have found real good

resulting from this work. One woman who was before unknown to me, touched, no doubt, with the special appeal, told me all her story, a sad pitiful series of degradation, consequent on the desertion of her husband. She told me how she had been a cook with a lady in Scotland, a valued servant, as she was married from that lady's house, and now she and her children were in the most miserable condition, and to none had she told her sorrowful tale.

With her leave, I wrote to the lady in Scotland, to ask if the story of her marriage was true, without mentioning her present state, and the answer was satisfactory. She went to the Mission service: the clergyman of the parish called on her, and after a time her life was reformed. A place was got for the eldest daughter of sixteen under a good mistress, where she has been doing well for four years.

I will tell one more story to show what good the Mission service can do. Daniel Church and his wife went the first evening in consequence of the hand-bill I had left with them. They were

not in the habit of hearing sermons, and they were greatly struck by this one; and on coming home Phœbe said to her husband, "I should like to say a prayer to-night: we have long forgotten to do so;" and as she knelt down by the bed, Daniel knelt also, and they simply asked not to forget the words of the preacher. From that time the prayers have never been omitted. They went again and again to the church during that week, and thus began regular attendance at church every Sunday.

It is now four years since that Mission week: never since then has Daniel lost an hour's work from idleness, unpunctuality, or drink. He is a painter, and from being steady he is in regular employ. He has a large family. His wages are about 26*s.* a week; he makes more by being "super" at the Olympic Theatre for four months in the year, and also gets work from neighbours, by which means he makes in all about £10 additional a year. I often meet him as I go to church in the morning. He now has good Sunday clothes; his countenance

beams with happiness, both he and his wife often tell me that the joy religion has brought to them is beyond words. There is no cant about him: he is a strong, manly, good-looking young fellow. His children are well brought up: they are kept regularly to school. The mother tries to add a little to the income by making band-boxes—her own trade before she married—and as each year goes on they will be better off, the wages will increase, and the elder children will be earning something.

I was once speaking to Mrs. Church, and asking her what other change religion had made in their lives besides going to church. She said, "It has made my husband so careful. When Sunday came he would often go off for the day on the river, or to some garden, and spend his money, and not only his own, but our friends, for he owed as much as £5 to our friends—money that we had borrowed at different times for these excursions; nor did we give a thought as to how it would be paid back. Now we have nearly paid it off; but since I began to

think about what was right, it has been a heavy burden on me." Now the life of this painter and his wife and children is made bright, as many others are, by the comforts and the joys of religion. He loves his church, and her services. The Sunday is not only a day of rest to him,—it is one of enjoyment. The wife has her mothers' meeting, the children have their Sunday School, and often will they walk out together of a Sunday evening.

In many parishes "Sisters" will undertake the visiting; from Clewer and East Grinstead many are sent out. They are welcomed by the poor for their kindness and loving sympathy. The dress is neither a protection nor a hindrance in their work. It is no protection, because none is needed. Any lady can visit anywhere if she is simply dressed and is seen to be going quietly about her work, and I do not expect she would ever meet with any incivility, and as for the hindrance or Protestant dislike there may be to a "Sister's" dress, that would also be unnoticed by the poor, who know for what object

these Sisters spend their lives. There is one Sister I have known who might have been one of the Saints of old, so beloved and honoured was she by the poor. She was a lay Sister, and had been brought up in the country, but her power and influence over the working people was immense, she could do anything with them. When she left off visiting the parish I have referred to, I took up her district, and I saw that the love the poor felt for her was quite remarkable.

There was one family that she had literally snatched from drunkenness; no effort did she spare, she tried all means, and at last, winning them to a belief in prayer, she taught them how to pray, by going every evening to their room at nine to join with them in family prayers. Her name was Monica, and like her namesake, she was earnest in prayer for those she loved. Many a butcher, costermonger, and scavenger were by her led to the teaching and Sacraments of the Church, and though this Sister has not been seen by them for some years, her memory

is still as fresh as ever, and those who knew her will gladly talk of her, and of the good Clergyman who visited wherever there was sickness and trouble. They are gone, but their words and their work are not forgotten.

CHAPTER IX.

NIGHT SCHOOLS.

THE district of which I have hitherto been speaking is very near the West End of London, and was formerly a most aristocratic part of the town. By the china tablets fastened against some of the houses in this neighbourhood, we see where Dryden, Burke, and Sir Joshua Reynolds lived, but now these houses are each occupied by several families of working-people.

The Duke of Monmouth had also a house close to the Dials, and his room can still be seen just as he left it, his arms painted on the pannelled walls, and carved in wood over the chimney-piece ; the ceiling is heavily decorated, and you can fancy yourself when in that room once more in the days of the Stuarts, instead of

being in the very centre of a great warehouse, which sends out its goods to all parts of the world, and represents well the active trade and the toil of the nineteenth century. The Duke of Grafton also lived close by: but though the house still bears his name, it has no remains of former greatness, and is now occupied like the other houses I have mentioned, by several families of working people.

In the poorest part of the parish is a building used partly as an Industrial School, partly as a Night Refuge; it was formerly the library of Charles I., and was afterwards used for prayer-meetings by Oliver Cromwell. It was surrounded by a garden, thence the name of Rose Street, one of the outlets from this quarter. In later days, a market was held here, and the porters used to stand hard by waiting to be hired—and so gave their name to another street. The remembrance was kept up no doubt for some time of the kings and the princes who visited this spot, as the name of Princes' Row belongs to the houses that surround

the Refuge—the poorest, the dirtiest, and the lowest houses that this part of London can boast of, making the prefix "prince" a very mockery to the Row we are speaking of. But the remembrance of princes, of gardens, of poets and of statesmen exists no longer in the minds of the dwellers in these parts. What they know Princes' Row to be famous for is the gambling that is always going on there amongst the idle and the worthless of the neighbourhood. Stretched on the pavement you may see a small group, some playing, others looking on at games of cards, of marbles, or with stones, those various games well-known to the street arabs, and which are so numerous, that a different one belongs to each month of the year.

In January what are called shoots are in the hands of most boys—that is an elastic fastened to a frame, with which bits of orange peel and other things can be shot forth to a great distance; and I know well the time when this sport is in vogue by the annoyance it is to me

in the night school. Later they have cat-traps, or tip-cats, as they are called, a simple game with two pieces of wood; then there are marbles, tops, buttons, kites, cherry stones; in August grottos, probably in memory of St. James of Compostella; at other times rounders, and gobs, a game played with stones placed on divisions marked out on the pavement, and thrown up into the air and caught as they fall on the back of the hand. In November they buy what are called fireworks, explosive balls, that make a loud noise in falling to the ground. Hoops are used by smaller boys in the winter, as snow-balling is but a rare pleasure for Londoners.

The police will tell you that Princes' Row is remarkable for having more apprehensions than any other spot of the same size in London. Not only is it a resort for street gamblers, but it is also a favourite *rendezvous* for fights. I have heard of one grand one in the last five years, between the champions of Marylebone and St. Giles, who met there

as a convenient battle-field on which to try their relative strength.

And the reason for this choice of Princes' Row, is that round the Refuge there is a broad road and pavement, where carriages and carts seldom pass. No strangers make this road a thoroughfare,—women from the neighbouring streets are afraid of going round Princes' Row, and policemen do not like to come there alone, as they have often met with rough treatment when endeavouring to stop a fight. There are four outlets from this Row—two of them are merely courts, and when a band wishes to engage the ground for gambling or fighting, scouts are posted at the various entrances, who give timely notice of the approach of the policeman. Often as I have passed by I have seen boys quietly lying on the pavement enjoying their game, and suddenly they have sprung up and disappeared, and it was only after some minutes that I have seen the disturbing element in their slowly advancing enemy. But from both boys and men of this

class, whose solace it seems to be to gamble, to swear, to drink, and to fight, who are ill-housed and ill-educated, I have experienced nothing but courtesy and respect. The dwellers of Princes' Row tell me that the swearing over the games is appalling; but as I pass them, or stand by talking to any one they are silent.

About five years ago I determined to try what I could do with these poor boys; who from their very civility to myself, I felt were open to the refining influence of a woman's teaching. So in February, 1873, after knowing the neighbourhood for three years, I began a School on Sunday afternoons. I invited four boys to come, these brought others, and from that time to August, I had a varying number of from eight to twenty-five every Sunday. I began the School with a working shoemaker, who lived in the next street, and later I had a postman to help; but he was always called "Squint Eye" by the boys, from a personal defect and he never got much hold over them.

The shoemaker's temper and patience used to be sorely tried: as for mine, I felt it no trial, for the fact of contending with the determined mischief of some of the boys, had in it the delight of a fight, in which I was generally victorious.

I tried to arrange the boys in classes, and taught them reading, writing, and arithmetic. The first year I did not attempt any religious instruction, my chief reason being that they were too unruly and uncivilised, and would only have made an irreverent mocking of such teaching. But in order to show them that there was something to be aimed at beyond mere learning, I ended the lessons with a prayer, when I was able to get them sufficiently quiet to have a reasonable hope that they would behave with reverence during the few minutes the prayer lasted; but more than once as I repeated the Lord's prayer aloud, I have heard some of the boys parodying it throughout in very blasphemous language.

The moment of dispersion was often the time

of revolt. The room we had, was lent to us by the vicar of the parish; in the week it was used for a Ragged School, where some industrial work was taught. It opened out of a passage from the street, the house door being always open. The boards which formed the partition of this passage were not very tightly joined, and cabbage-stalks and winkles picked up from the street were often thrown in through the apertures. Occasionally a boy would come and spit at us through the openings, or make noises that were answered by the boys within, with such powers of ventriloquism that it was impossible to discover the culprit. A step ladder led down from the room we were in to a cellar, used in the week-time for cutting up wood and preparing it in faggots for sale. As I said, the moment of trial was the end of the school. As long as I could keep the boys under my eye, they were tolerably well-behaved, and to call to them by name was generally sufficient to restore order; but if, when the prayer was finished, my attention was wanted at the door, and I could

no longer keep watch over the ladder, down would they rush, and make hideous confusion with the faggots,—and one day lighted a match and narrowly escaped burning down the house.

The amount of learning the boys got during this first half-year was not much: later we could do more amongst them when the discipline was greater, and several have learned to read who only knew their letters when they first came. But though there was not much learned by the boys, there was education and humanising of many amongst them. For instance, one boy of fifteen, who had attended very well up to June, came then to me, and told me he was leaving for a Baptist Sunday School where the boys behaved better, and he had got the taste for school by coming to us. Six of the boys who began that summer have continued with me till either too old to come any more, or have left the parish and gone to other schools. Later, two of these six boys were confirmed, and two when they were seventeen years of age went

to the Working Men's College, anxious to increase their knowledge.

I have said that I meet with nothing but courtesy and civility from the boys, and some may say the spitting, the throwing cabbage stalks, and the cat-calls were not civilities. True! but they were not directed at me particularly, and arose from a mischievous feeling for fun. One Sunday in June I was out of town, and I left the school in the charge of a young lady and a "Sister." The boys took advantage of my absence, and spent the whole time in throwing winkles about the room.

In October of this year we began a Night School, in addition to the one on Sunday afternoons, the boys paying a penny for the two evenings. The payment was useful in two ways: it made them value the teaching more, and gave us the power of refusing to admit boys who brought no money with them, when we knew their only object in coming was to make a disturbance. In the week, the staff of teachers consisted of myself, my maid, and a

gentleman who had some previous experience of rough boys, and who has from that time carried on the school jointly with myself, both on week-days and on Sundays. Another teacher came for a few weeks; but he was driven away by the impertinence of these poor roughs. His hair was red, and he had a pointed beard, for which reason the boys called him the Shah, and used to ask him who his barber was. These and other impertinences, which he could neither tolerate nor correct, drove him from the school. After he left, a Scotch gardener came, and was of great use, having a firm and quiet manner by which he could control the boys who were under him, and make the lessons interesting.

We had the advantage of a better school-room this year, which was again lent to us by the vicar. It was close to Princes' Row and Princes' Court: but though we had no objection-able passage, we were constantly disturbed by knockings at the door from boys whom we had previously expelled, and we were obliged at last to ask the police to allow us to have a

constable on duty outside the school whilst we were there in the evening, as there was constant throwing up of stones and rubbish at our windows. Indeed, one day a large stone came through into the schoolroom, but fortunately fell on the floor without striking any one. We had from twenty to thirty boys on Sundays, several never missed; but many came but once or twice to see what it was like. Occasionally an unruly boy would come, and either begin to fight with his neighbour or refuse to do the lesson with the others. I would remonstrate with him at first, and if that had no effect I would get one of the male teachers to turn him out. This was a matter of some difficulty, as we were closely packed, and the boy would often kick and resist. However, during the struggle, there was perfect silence, all the boys would watch intently and a calm seemed to fall on those that remained after one of the number had been expelled. This was the only punishment I could either threaten or inflict. The

first expulsion was not final, as I would take them back if they promised to behave well.

In January, 1874, I tried what good could be done for the boys by taking them to an evening Mission Service, at the Refuge, held by the curate in charge of this district. The school finished at 5 o'clock, and I then invited those who liked to remain with me, to listen to a story. I read to them till six, or if they wished to go home to their tea, I asked them to return and to go with me to the service. About a dozen boys generally accompanied me. They behaved very well, and they appeared to enjoy the short service, which consisted of prayers, of singing and a short and simple sermon,—the whole thing lasting little over half-an-hour.

For three months, I continued this practice, and thought that this would have given the boys a taste for attending evening service, but I was rather disheartened on saying to one of them who had been the most regular—

"Now that Easter has come, the services will leave off here, and I hope you will attend some

church where you will have the same hymns and prayers you have been hearing during the last three months." The lad answered me, "No, I do not think it is likely I shall go to any church." "Why?" I said. "Because," was the reply, "I do not believe in the whole thing, in a God or anything else." And so I discovered he had come only for the sake of pleasing me. This same boy kept on regularly coming to our school till he joined the Working Men's College. His home was wretched and miserably poor from the drunkenness of his father and the illness of his mother, and the poor boy was broken-hearted at times, and has told me the misery was so great he should like to put an end to himself; and here was an instance where I am sure the constant sympathy and interest felt for him by his teachers helped him to work on, so that now he is in a good position as a musical instrument maker, very dutifully helping the wretched home where he no longer lives.

A year or two ago, I asked him to come and help me to teach in the Night School. He

came a few times, and then left off. I rather wondered at his so soon giving up helping me, but I said nothing, as I knew he was hard-worked, and I supposed he found the school too great a toil. However, some years after I found out the reason, and it was this, that in coming out of the school, the other boys would lay wait for him and pelt him with mud and stones. After bearing this ill-treatment for a few weeks, and having his Sunday hat broken, he gave up coming to teach, but did not like to tell me the cause of his doing so.

Another boy we were able to help very materially this year through the work of the school was John Vine. He had been at Feltham, but had left it two years when I first knew him. He was a strong boy, and well-disposed: but he had a drunken mother, who lived with an Irishman, who could work well, but was also generally drunk. The boy's father, a Scotchman, had died some years back, and when I first knew John he was in rags, seldom having any thing like shoes on his feet, but always ready

to do any cleaning or sweeping he could get from his neighbours. Notwithstanding his rags, he came regularly to the school, and was well-behaved, and seemed very anxious to work. A friend of mine, hearing my account of the boy, asked to see him, was interested in him, and clothed him, and got him work, which he kept for four years, always behaving himself properly. When unfortunately through differences with his wife, whom he had married at seventeen years of age, he got drunk and lost his place; but there are such ups and down in the life of the poor that I do not despair of him yet.

On Sundays, the curate who held the Mission Service used to come into the school for half an hour and have a class of boys, consisting of a few who were willing to be taught by him, or whom I could persuade to join the class. Four of these were unbaptised: they all promised to be prepared by the clergyman for that Sacrament, but only one kept his word,—was baptised, and afterwards confirmed, and has turned out a steady, well-behaved boy.

This year we gave the boys three treats. On Christmas Day we gave them a supper, on Easter Monday we took them for a day into the country, and on the Bank holiday in August they had an afternoon tea in a garden near Kensington. All these pleasures helped much to educate them in other ways than book-learning, making them feel that they were cared for by those above them in position, for the sake of whose good opinion they wished to keep respectable.

The discipline of a school depends to a great extent on its locality, and also on the size and suitable arrangement of the school room. And so we improved still more in our discipline, when we moved again from Princes' Court to Chapel Place in the third year of our school. The reason of this change was that owing to the death of the vicar the school in Princes' Court was done away with, and we were then allowed the use of one of the large school rooms lately finished and adjoining the church.

We began both the Sunday and Night School

in December, and continued them on to August, but found it was a mistake to do so, for in the summer the attendance became very small. In the evenings the boys liked to be out after hot days of work, and on Sundays they would generally go for excursions into the country. It is bad for the discipline of the school to keep it on with a poor attendance, as it makes the boys think they are doing their teachers a kindness in coming, instead of the reverse. Gratitude is not a condition of mind we often meet with, and it is important for the boys to feel that it is themselves who are benefited by coming to school, and not to think that any advantage accrues to the teachers by their attendance.

We had a larger attendance on Sundays than on week days, and about half a dozen boys of seventeen, who came very regularly. We had not quite as many bad boys, who only came for mischief, as at the other school. This one was not in a thoroughfare, nor was it a convenient resort for the idle boys who hang about

the streets all day. I have had boys at the school whose cropped hair showed me whence they had come. Some disappeared for a time, and I heard of them next at Clerkenwell. Others I have known from the police to be confederates of thieves, and there were a few whose lives were so ill-spent that there was not much hope of improving them. Indeed the conclusion I have come to in this respect is, that we can improve those who are willing to improve themselves, and who wish to be respectable, and to learn;—but by no Sunday or Night School alone can we reform idle and evil boys to any great extent. The school may be the means of bringing them to a knowledge of what is better, and a wish to improve, but to be reformed they must be altogether removed from their bad associations.

One boy, especially, Arthur Anderson, is an example of what I am saying. His father was a respectable carpenter, who from the ill-health of his wife, was in great poverty. The boy had learned no trade, and had no regular place, but

got any chance work he could find in the neighbourhood. He was sixteen and wished, he said, to go to sea—a profession I always recommend to any boys who seem fitted for it. He got his papers and went up for the medical examination; but unfortunately having bad teeth, he was considered unfit for the navy. The boy was in despair, and said to me that he felt it would be impossible, if he remained where he was, to withstand the bad companions who surrounded him. He asked me to get him on board a merchant vessel, and the longer the voyage, and the further from England he should go, the better pleased he would be. But two things were necessary for this—an expensive outfit, and his teeth being put in order. The first I was able to get for him through the liberality of two of my friends, and the second through a letter to the Dental Hospital, where the boy patiently spent two or three hours for many days, whilst a young practitioner was getting through the work, evidently new to him, as he would often leave the boy

to ask advice as to how the next operation was to be performed.

The boy sailed to Sydney, and was away two years, during which time he wrote me several happy, grateful letters, and when I saw him on his return he brought me an excellent report from the ship, and was eager to return for the next voyage. He had received on that trip only ten shillings a month, but was promised for the next two pounds a month.

If he had remained at home no doubt he would have gone as he expected, to the bad; and often the downfall of a boy seems to be but the result of an accident, or of a misfortune, and once sunk into the slough of wickedness to be found in London I know no human efforts that can drag them out of the mire.

There was a boy, James Jinks, whose fate I much deplored. He had been brought up at St. James' Workhouse School, and had received a very good education. He was placed on leaving at Chapman and Hall's, and remained there for six months, obtaining a very good

character. He had to leave because he caught scarlet fever, and was taken to a hospital. On coming out, he had no place to go to, no friends, and soon no clothes. He then fell amongst evil companions. I saw him often about this time, and gave him some clothes, after I had inquired of Mr. Chapman if he had given a true account of himself. He did not come near me again for some time, and when he did he said he had been ill. I then said I would try to get him a place; but took the precaution first of sending the shoe-maker teacher to where he lived—such a bad account, however, was brought to me of his way of living, that I did not feel justified in recommending him to any employer. And this poor boy, had he not had the scarlet fever at that unfortunate time of his life, might have kept well through those years of difficulty.

Another boy I had been much interested in, and who had learned to read with us, was John Mac. He had been very troublesome many times, but with constant rebukes and encouragement we had kept him on. One evening I in-

advertently left the bag of pennies I received from the boys, on the desk, and it disappeared. I suspected this boy; but only said that the bag had gone. The boy I suspected never came again, and I could well imagine he had taken it.

The discipline was not yet good, and we were much tormented in January, the month dedicated to the game of shoots which I have described. The bits of orange-peel flew about the school, and it was impossible to discover the offender and none would tell of the other. In March the tops were produced, nuts were thrown about, and the ventriloquism that continued was impossible to detect; but by degrees the bad boys left off coming, as the discipline became more severe.

The last conflict we had was in 1876; a boy, called Patrick, had come in, whom I knew to be thoroughly bad. However, as he promised to behave well, I let him remain, but he soon showed that his only object was to disturb the others. He made noises, and finally refused to

do the lesson I set him. I then told him to leave the class he was in, and to sit elsewhere. This also he refused to do, and whilst I was speaking to him a young guardsman, who was teaching another class, saw the insubordination, and fresh from the discipline of his men came up and offered to turn out the boy. I still tried to parley with Patrick, but with no success; so before he knew what was in store for him, the young officer was behind him, and putting his own arms under those of the very dirty and ragged Patrick, lifted him up and put him clean out of the school at the expense of tremendous kicks on his own shins: this was the last forcible expulsion we had from the school. Boys still came who were very poor, and some who certainly had not sufficient food. One of them told his teacher one cold winter evening how he had slept for three nights in the street, because his father had driven him from home. He was very cold, and was thankful to get a warming from the good fire. I called next day at his home, and from his mother heard that what

he had said was true. She did not venture to let the boy in again, as the father, who had been drinking hard, said he would kill him if he returned. I was able to get this boy into St. Andrew's Home for Working Boys, in Dean Street, to which I have already referred. Here he could earn his own living, and has turned out well.

The following year we put the Night School under Government Inspection, closing in April, after having kept it open fifty-six nights, four boys attending over fifty nights, and many over forty nights in the season. Several different teachers came at various times, and very kindly helped us to teach; but the one who joined me in Princes' Court was alone responsible with myself in managing the school.

We still had some unruly boys; there was one in particular—George Snow—who was full of fun and talk, and would always have the last word. This boy unfortunately gave our school a bad name for discipline, as he would "chaff" the Government Inspector, and was daunted by

nothing; but he was a good boy and never missed an evening, though often kept late at work for a shop in Piccadilly; and when he left it, with a good character of three years, I was able to get him a place as a railway porter, where he has done very well, justifying the recommendation I gave him.

That year, 1875, games were started for the boys on the Wednesdays, and a club on the Saturday nights, the school being held on Tuesdays and Fridays, for which they now paid twopence a week. The games and club are managed by two gentlemen, and are very largely attended—the nightly average attendance being 140. The charge for admission is the same as at the school—a penny per night. The games were begun as an experiment in the direction of forming Working Lads' Clubs on the same principle as those of men, the attractions provided being of course different to suit youthful tastes. The experiment has been entirely successful in regard to the number of members, the room

being always full to overflowing, and the receipts from the boys have been sufficient to cover all expenses (save rent) including salaries, light, coal, &c. Fencing and boxing, besides quieter amusements of bagatelle, draughts, and dominos, are the principal games, while a coffee and cake bar add to the profit of the club. There is ample scope for giving lectures for the lads, the only hindrance in this way being the lack of personal assistance.

It is plain from the large attendances at this club that there is a great need for places of harmless recreation for the immense working-boy population in London, and the clergy would find extraordinary opportunities of gaining a hold over their boy-parishioners by using their school rooms in the evening in the manner indicated.

We changed the Sunday School into one of purely religious teaching, but the attendances became much less, and it no longer attracted the older boys. Our object has always been toget a hold on boys of from thirteen to

eighteen,—that dangerous time in the life of working boys and girls, when their habits are formed for good or for evil, for industry or for idleness. At this time especially are they alive to the influence of those above them; they are capable of affection for their teachers, which will induce them to keep straight. The school has to vie with many pleasures of an attractive nature outside, hence the teaching must be made attractive, the boys must feel an interest in the success of the schools as tested by the Government Inspection. They must feel they are working for a definite object, and that their individual advancement is as much a matter of interest to their teachers as to themselves. The tone you get into a school influences very much all new-comers, and the higher you set the standard the more you will accomplish.

I have always remembered what an experienced School Inspector once said to me about good marks for punctual attendance at school. "If you give them good marks (to

the children) for doing their duty, duty will not become to them a rule, a necessity. Give bad marks for unpunctuality, then they will feel that they have done wrong in neglecting the duty, not a meritorious action in fulfilling it." This principle I have tried to carry out in the Night School. The attendance being a voluntary action on the part of the boys, it was necessary in order to ensure regularity and attention to assume an authority over them, which of course existed only as an idea. Often have I met some of our boys in the street who had lately been missing school, and when I asked them why they had not been they made some excuse, and tacitly admitted my right to demand their attendance.

The following letter will exemplify what I say. I one evening told the writer, a boy of seventeen to write for a composition a letter giving me the reason for his irregular attendance whilst I had been away, and to my surprise he wrote this—

"MADAM,

"I write you these few lines in ancer to your letter inquiring of me why I have not attended school of late. I must own it was wrong of me to stay away, but since you have been away there are but few who keep order of any kind. I suppose Mr. Bennett[1] is not enough for them, but since you are back again I shall be most happy to return.

"Yours &c.,

"F. W. J."

With regard to marks and prizes, I think the plan of giving threepence or sixpence to the boy who has done the best exercise in the class, or who has answered best, is very objectionable; it makes them, as I said before, think it a merit if they do well. The system of working in standards, as practised in the schools under Government inspection, is far the best impetus they can have. To all who were qualified by their attendance and good

[1] The schoolmaster engaged to help to teach.

behaviour to be examined by the inspector we gave a framed certificate, recording their standard and number of attendances. These certificates we found were much valued.

The first year we were under Government inspection we presented twenty-four, and the second year twenty-five boys, to these we gave an excursion into the country and other pleasures. By the system of standards a stupid boy of sixteen who has struggled with much difficulty to pass the first standard is as much rewarded as the clever boy of fourteen who gets through his fractions in the sixth standard without any difficulty. The inspection is much looked forward to by the boys, and last year their behaviour was so good that the inspector complimented us on our discipline.

In the first report Mr. Matthew Arnold says, "The neighbourhood is one where an Evening School might do much service. But forty hours to accomplish work for which day-scholars have five hundred hours!"—meaning, by this, how is it possible to advance one standard with merely

the work of a Night School. However, we have done so in several cases, as our examination of 1877 will show; and one boy may specially be remarked on, who the first year got to Standard IV., soon after leaving the Day School. Last year he passed successfully in Standard V., and this year he has got through Standard VI. Of course the boy who gains a standard has seldom missed a night, attending forty or fifty times from October to April. Many of them will come straight from work, bringing with them a piece of bread to eat for their supper sooner than lose any time by going home for it; and I have seen some so tired with their long day's work, that they have dropped to sleep over their lessons. The boys like to find themselves of importance at an inspection, with the knowledge that their progress will be reported on; and much of the orderly behaviour of last year was owing to their hearing the report read, where their want of discipline was mentioned. This gave them the desire to try and deserve a better report.

Several boys have, like the writer of the letter

above-mentioned, been deterred from coming through the rude behaviour of the others. This was the case with two Scotch boys, very intelligent and anxious to learn. They left off coming; so I went to inquire the cause, and saw the mother, a respectable, clean Scotchwoman. She was reluctant at first to give me any reason, but on my pressing her said the fact was, that her boys told her that they could not bear to sit quietly by and hear a lady rudely treated. I told her the discipline was improving, and she must tell them I particularly wished them to return, as the presence of orderly boys helped to make the others more orderly. They returned and were constant in their attendance, until they had to leave London with their father. I have lost sight of them now, but perhaps they will turn up again at some future time.

Many boys pass away from our sight. Out of the 120 admittances one year, and 100 the next, we presented, as I said, about twenty-five each year, but as many more came directly under our

notice and influence in various ways, though they did not make up the number of attendances required by Government. Some left off coming when they had to work overtime; some ceased to care for the school, but even those who were but a short time with us had gained something from contact with teachers who were interested in their welfare. They at least would never later in life have the bitter, though mistaken feeling that exists in the minds of many of the poor, that the rich and well-to-do take no heed of the poor, and that their happiness and interests are not considered.

There are often disappointments in the boys, and those perhaps whom we take most trouble for turn out worst. One boy, James Webb a nice-looking, clean, bright boy, with light curling hair, came very regularly to us one winter. He had no settled place of work, and told us he would much like to go to sea. He had once made a short voyage, and said it was the life he would prefer; his mother, a drinking Irishwoman, sold watercresses, an employment that

is considered the lowest amongst hawkers. I went to see her to ask if she was willing the boy should go to sea, she said quite so, as he did not help her at all, so after some trouble we got him engaged by the captain of a small trading vessel, he was started with clothes and many small things that would be useful to him on board ship. He sailed, and I got a letter from him from the docks, before starting, saying how much he liked the ship, and how grateful he was for the help he had received. My mind was easy about him, thinking that an honest seafaring life would set him up in the world, when one day as I was walking down Picadilly who should I see but James in his sailor's clothes, taking a good look into a print shop. He started when I spoke to him, but explained his presence there, by the fact that his ship had gone ashore in a fog off the Isle of Wight, and that he had come up to give evidence with reference to the insurance of the ship. Some thing about his manner made me suspicious. I made inquiries; found out that

all he had said was untrue,—that he had really left his ship as soon as it touched land, had come to London and was amusing himself about town. When I discovered his misconduct and deceit, I saw him once more, and told him how ill he had behaved. I have never spoken to him since, though I have seen him, and I fear that this attempt to put him straight having failed, placed him in a worse position morally than if nothing had been done for him.

As a general rule, the clothes of a boy will be an index of his good conduct, as there is such a demand for boys' labour in this part of London, that any industrious, respectable boy can get work and good wages. I was one Sunday saying this to the boys, that I thought less well of them when I saw them in ragged and dirty clothes, and I knew it was generally their own fault. One or two of them said, "Ah! but teachers in other Sunday Schools say they like us better in rags: they do not want us to have good clothes!" On which I answered, that

those teachers probably did not know them as I did in school, and out of school, in their homes, and often, alas! idling away many hours outside the public house.

But of all faults the worst to contend with in a boy is idleness. If he will not work, you may give him chance upon chance; you may reprove, you may encourage, nothing will do them good. I have had a few cases of idleness where I have got a boy a place, but his laziness caused him to be discharged. I have come upon boys I knew of seventeen, who instead of working were playing at marbles in courts where they never expected to meet me.

As I have said, the worthless boys have ceased to come to our school. We have a regular attendance, and perfect order and quiet. The boys on entering fall into their proper places—none have to be called to order. When we finish, as we always do with a prayer, there is complete calm. They are all working lads, some are apprentices, some have learned

their trades, and some are errand boys. The work of teaching is no longer one of difficulty, the civilising has been done, but much more could still be done if we had more helpers. We could have more religious teaching on Sundays, and more classes on the week days. The boys are now attracted to the school, and as long as it continues to be conducted in the same spirit, more and more boys will come. But the natural consequences of the improved discipline is to attract only the better class of working boys. To meet the rest a school must begin again in the worst neighbourhood, amidst the wild and turbulent spirits. That work is open still to any one who will undertake it, and I should gladly welcome any who would begin it next autumn I am sure they would meet with as good results as we have had.

In time, with the work of the School Board, there will, I hope, be no such thing as boys of fourteen and fifteen coming to us unable to read, but we shall always find boys who have learned to read and write, who, like those we

now have, having passed the Fifth Standard, are anxious to come not only to keep up their learning, but to increase it; and we shall find that the school, the games, and the club, will be the best means of preserving the boys from the evils which surround them in great cities.

I have mentioned already instances of the different influences, that various teachers have over the boys, and I think that almost the first element of success in dealing with them is the sympathy that should exist between the teacher and the taught. We have had a marked example of this in the Girls' Night School held in the same building. It was begun two years ago, and was so successful that last year, the school having been open three nights a week for five months, there was an average attendance of forty girls, from thirteen to twenty years of age. This year the mistresses are changed from various causes, and the members have diminished to an average of nine. At last only six came, and the school is now closed.

Instead of a night school for girls I have now started a sewing class for them once a week; it is for those who have left school and are at work in trades or at home. They readily bring their pennies to pay for the class, and we teach them needlework and cutting out, and great is the delight of these poor girls to be able to go home and show their mothers that they can cut out a shift. The best of mothers could not well teach their girls to cut out in one crowded room which is occupied by the whole family day and night; and nothing contributes more to the comfort of the home of a working man than when his wife can make his shirts and the children's clothes, instead of buying them ready-made, as many do in London, a cheap article perhaps, but ill-sewn and a poor material.

Whilst the girls work a story can be read to them, or they can join in singing. Work with both boys and girls of this age is deeply interesting, and no labour will more repay any person for the time and trouble they may spend upon it.

CHAPTER X.

AMUSEMENTS AND RECREATIONS.

THE Englishman who travels through Belgium and Germany will be struck with the easy, harmless pleasures of the working classes in those countries. He will see in the public gardens of an evening, in most of the foreign towns, great numbers of people sitting out under the trees, drinking their coffee and beer, smoking and listening to the music. The wives and daughters will also be there, and all will be enjoying quiet recreation, so necessary after the dull monotony of work. He will also find abroad, in the very centre of the large towns, open squares with shady trees and avenues, and many seats for the weary.

We have squares also in London, but of

what use are they, with the exception of one, to any but the inhabitants of those squares? If those who advocate these closed gardens, would walk through Leicester Square, or by the gardens on the Embankment, they would see what a boon they are to the poor. Many a sick man or woman will crawl from their dingy court to these open spaces, and there finding a comfortable seat and breathing freer and fresher air than at home will regain some of their former health. These improvements may come, and will come, I expect, in time; but what obstacles are always being thrown in the way of all advancement? Lately the Duke of Westminster wished to open to the public a garden near the Victoria Station; but the vestry objected to taking care of it, and it could not be done. We have more beautiful parks in London, larger and more numerous than in any other capital in Europe; but how little do they benefit the great mass of the working classes? There is no attraction to draw them there, no music, no

refreshment, and were it not for the occasional political meetings held in Hyde Park, the Serpentine, the Albert Memorial, and the statue erected in honour of the Duke of Wellington, would be unknown to thousands of Londoners. As for Kensington Gardens it is as little known to the working man who lives beyond Regent Street, as Japan is to the ordinary traveller.

This want of outdoor amusement, the separation of classes that exist in that respect in England, is one of the chief causes of drunkenness. The public house becomes the only resource for the working man. The saying of "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is essentially true amongst our people, and one of the reasons of the dulness of many Englishmen is the want of amusement.

Our Sundays are spoken of by the foreigner as the very depth of dulness: and if it is dull to the educated what must it not be to the illiterate?

In the poorer parts of the town, Sunday trading goes on briskly up to twelve o'clock in the day. There is no time in the week when the

streets about the Dials are so thronged as this. It is no doubt necessary to allow the meat and vegetables for the Sunday dinner to be bought on that morning by the poor, who have no larders or places where they can keep any perishable food; but if the shops were compelled to close earlier, the purchasers would be out earlier, and the Sunday would not be so wasted as it is. The dinner on that day is often not ready till two or three o'clock, which leaves but little time for a walk—the most health-giving occupation of the Day of Rest. The church-going time for the poor is in the evening, at seven o'clock, as few will go in the morning. The children are sent off to Sunday School, the mothers shop and cook, whilst the fathers will, in most cases, take a few extra hours sleep.

It may be well that some shops should be left open on the Sunday, though I would have those closed by ten in the morning; but I can see no reason that could be urged for bonnet shops, stalls for ribbons, combs, artificial flowers and sham jewellery, being open on Sunday.

Those who keep these stalls and cheap shops will tell you that they make more on that day than on any other day in the week; so unless all are compelled to close, you cannot expect one or two to give up such large profits. I did once find a man who had done so, and suffered in consequence. He was a Baptist, and a Sunday School teacher. I found him one day packing up his goods, I asked him why he was leaving that street. He said that he found he could not make his shop pay, as he did not keep it open on Sunday. I said, "Are the Baptists very strict about Sunday trading?" He rebuked me by saying, "I should think all Christians would think it wrong." This man had lately taken the shop, and had hoped that the profits would enable him to marry. Now, however, he had to give up those hopes for a time, and return to be a shopman, and all for conscience' sake. I have met but few men who would forego so much for principle. One other case I once heard of, where a man gave up the prospect of thousands sooner than

traffic in opium; but such instances are indeed rare in all positions of life.

To return to the working man's Sunday. There are some, not a few of them, who do not, like my Baptist friend, look upon Sunday School teaching as the pleasantest of all occupations; what else can they do? Is there nothing better for them to do than to wait, as I have often seen them wait outside the public house, till the appointed hour of its opening? If the museums and galleries were opened, as I hope some day they will be, many a working man would spend his afternoons there, and from thence he could stroll into the parks. Let anything be done to make him possess, and put on, Sunday clothes, so that one day in the seven should be a Day of Rest. If it is right to have the shops open on the Sunday morning, so that the poor may provide for their dinner, might not the parks be made more attractive, with refreshments and music on that day?

The greatest benefit conferred on the poor of late years has been the institution of the Bank

holidays. St. Lubbock, as he is sometimes called, has done as much towards improving the working people as any philanthropist. There are of course some evils connected with these holidays, and on these many will lay hold; but the advantages far outweigh the evils. Every year there are fewer commitals at the police-court after the Bank holidays, as more and more look forward to these days of pleasure. They are incentives to lay by money for an excursion on that day. The children even will put by their pennies in the bank, so as to have something to spend on that holiday; so that besides the happiness of the day itself, there is the long drawn-out pleasure of anticipation.

As you walk through the streets of London on the summer Bank holidays, you will see numerous family groups walking towards the different railway stations; and should you be on that day in any of the suburban districts, you will see the parks, commons, and gardens swarming with holiday folk. So over-

whelming are the numbers of Londoners who are anxious then to breathe the country air, and to enjoy a real holiday, that unfortunately all places of resort outside London are overcrowded, taking away from the pleasure of the visitor. Luckily there are some spots which cannot be overcrowded. Richmond Park and Hampstead Heath are large enough to admit of even more holiday parties than already frequent these places.

I have known a whole family start at eight in the morning to spend the day at Hampstead. The father, who is a shoemaker, could not afford the omnibus fare for himself, his wife, and five children, so they walked there and back, carrying between them babies and bundles. The joy of a holiday is beyond words to these hardworking people, particularly when the whole family can join in that pleasure. Some will go farther than the suburbs, and will make excursions to Windsor and Brighton: and I know some artisans who have been over to France for the two days. One man I know

who can never leave his work in a shop, takes advantage of the three days' holiday and goes during that time to the north of Scotland. Does not this give us a notion of the hard grind of work many have to undergo when only three days can be spared for a visit 500 miles off? But without the institution of the Bank holiday even those three days would not have been given.

For several years I have had a party on the August Bank holiday—about a hundred guests from the district I work in: men and women, lads and girls. I ask no children who can be left at home, as they always have their treats and excursions from their Day and Sunday Schools. These August parties have been most successful. At first few men came, they did not understand being asked with their mothers, and each man thought he would be the only one there. But by degrees, they discovered that some men did take this plunge, and now as many men as women accept the invitations.

These are sent out on cards specially printed

for the occasion; and it is curious how much pleasure they give and how much it enhances the attractions of the parties. They have generally taken place in a garden at Kensington, and a proof of their success—if any were needed in addition to their own expressions of enjoyment—is that the guests arrive at three, and do not leave till nine in the evening. During that time we have a sitting-down tea in the garden—one long table and many small ones. The refreshments are of a simple kind—tea, cake, bread and butter, and bread and jam; and on the tables are bowls full of flowers and quantities of heather, which is just then in full bloom. The flowers and heather the visitors take away with them. After tea we have singing. Last year many joined—there was the comic song from the Irishman, the beautiful, clear, trained voice of the choir boy; the sentimental, "Robin is shy, it's very distressing," sung by the young girl; the ballads and sacred songs from one musical friend, and from another wild and pathetic Scotch melodies.

The friends who could not sing were still able to contribute very greatly to the success of the party, for all talked to the guests, so that each had some pleasant conversation to remember. The attractions of this entertainment consisted in the leisure, the perfect ease, the freshness of the lovely garden; and the secret of success was the sympathy that existed between those entertaining and those who came to be entertained.

I once took a party of a hundred persons by train to Barnes on a Bank holiday. It was a difficult matter to get them all through the streets, over the river, into the crowded station, and to land them safely in the train. Unfortunately one poor deaf, old woman was left behind. It was a sad misfortune for her, because she was seventy years of age, and this was the first party she had ever been asked to. But a widowed niece, who was taking charge of her, who had also had rare holidays, feared she would not reach the station as quickly as all the others if she lingered with her less active companion. So she left her behind, and when

I asked for her at the station, I was told that the aunt had got lost on the road, as she walked so slowly. The poor old woman had in consequence to forego her one holiday, and the following winter the niece died, and she herself went into the workhouse. I tried to get leave for her to come to the next party I had; but the paupers are not allowed their liberty on the Bank holidays, as there would be more opportunity on those days than on any others for drunkenness. The next time I have a party, I must make a special appeal to the Board of Guardians, so that this poor soul should for once have the experience of a day's uninterrupted pleasure.

As soon as I had got them all into the train, I had no further difficulty. We got out at Barnes, walked up to a garden at Roehampton, where some of the party strolled about, whilst others went into Richmond Park till we had tea on the lawn of my friend's house. And a most thoroughly happy afternoon was spent, mostly owing to the help of several friends who joined

me there, and waited on the guests. But what I long to do on some Whit Monday, is to take down a party of London working people, to see a real wood, such a one as Alton Locke saw on his way to Cambridge. "At last I came to a wood—the first real wood that I had ever seen; not a mere park of stately trees growing out of smooth turf, but a real wild copse, tangled branches and grey stems falling across each other, deep ragged underwood of shrubs and great ferns like prince's feathers, and gay beds of flowers blue and pink and yellow, with butterflies flitting about them, and trailers that climbed and dangled from bough to bough. A poor, commonplace bit of copse, I dare say in the world's eyes, but to me a fairy wilderness of beautiful forms, mysterious gleams and shadows, teaming with manifold life."

To show such a wood to some of the working people would, I am sure, be giving them one of the greatest happinesses they could have, and I shall not be satisfied till I have

accomplished my desire. It is only on a Bank holiday that the families can all have a holiday together, and such is the force of public opinion and custom that all now expect this pleasure.

In Lancashire and Cheshire Whit Monday has always been kept as a general holiday, and large excursion parties are made to all the places of attraction in the neighbourhood, such as Dunham Park and Alderley Edge. The mill hands will all turn out on that day, and any one who has seen them enjoying themselves at either of these places must sympathise in the happiness they experience in getting out into the quiet country, far away from the smoke and dirt of a manufacturing town. Mrs. Gaskell has well described these excursionists to both places I mentio in her stories of *Pilgrim Street* and *Libbie Marsh;* but there is a heartiness and friendly independence in the working classes of these counties which we do not see to the same extent in Londoners. Here there is, as I have before said, such isolation; the poor all keep

so much apart from one another. Girls may be working in the same workshop, but there is not friendship or companionship between them, and their pleasures are therefore isolated, and they thus lose much enjoyment in life, for gaiety and brightness of spirits is most cultivated by companionship. Perhaps the employers of labour in London do not look on those they employ as belonging to them and under their care as much as do many of the mill-owners.

There is also the institution of Sunday Schools in those counties which bind many together. They are not there confined to children; grown-up persons still keep on attending the Sunday Schools and classes, and large parties of these, often consisting of one, two, or three hundred persons, will join together in an excursion. When I first began to work in London, I met a family who had only come from the north a few years before, and they would often speak to me of the happy day they had spent at Alderley Park when they came

over there from Manchester, being brought by the managers of a Sunday School. A successful treat, party, or excursion for the poor does not only confer pleasure for the day itself, but the memory of it will last a long time. It will be a day marked with a white stone, a day to be remembered, to be talked of afterwards to friends and children,—a day which will make them feel that their lives consist not only of dark or grey days, but also of bright ones.

Much of the success we have had with our parties I attribute to the feeling of fellowship amongst those invited. They seem to belong to one another, to one parish, to one mother's meeting, to one school. Those who have been to previous parties feel an interest in trying to make everything go off well, and they do their best to help and to be useful. Those who are gathered together are in very different positions of life. Some are small shopkeepers, some are well-to-do artisans, some are poor labourers, some widows who are with difficulty

getting their daily bread, and some old people receiving out-door parish relief. Girls who are working at their trades, or are out in service, and are allowed to come to this annual party, and finally boys who have attended the Night School, and who have there, though often of the roughest class, learned civility and decent behaviour. I have known some of my guests so poor, though they were steady and respectable, that I have had to lend them the money to get the gown or the coat out of pledge for that one day, to be returned the next to the pawnbroker's.

In the part of London I am speaking of there is a great mixture of classes, trades, and occupations. The artisan may live in the same house, or close by the clerk and the costermonger; the latter are principally Irish, and they will generally keep much together; and though the visitor will be cheered by their heartiness and friendly expressions amidst the dulness of the English, or the reserve of the Scotch, yet they will find their habits of dirt

and untidiness most dispiriting. A poor Scotchman is rarely met with here; if you do find any they are generally clean and thriving. Tailoring and shoemaking is the chief work in this district; there are also many unskilled labourers working as porters for Covent Garden or in the building trades. Besides these there are over a hundred trades of various kinds, all required for the West-end shops, near which the workmen must live.

From all these I gather my guests, and when there is a spirit of friendliness and good will, there will be no difficulty in thus mixing the very poor with the more comfortable and well-to-do.

I have dwelt long on the Bank holidays, for they seem to me the only days for real thorough enjoyment to the poor. Occasionally there is a procession through London, the entry of some princess, or foreign sovereign, and then we see how eagerly all will flock to the show. It may rain or it may snow, as it did when the Princess Royal left her English, or when the Duchess of

Edinburgh came from her Russian, home; but sunshine or rain, the streets are equally crowded, all turning out for the sight, waiting long hours for the enjoyment of a few instants. With what joy did not all London turn out into the streets to gaze at and welcome that most beautiful princess who came to us from her Danish home. A poor boy who saw her pass by on that day said to me, "Why, the Princess looked at me and smiled at me."

On any of those occasions when crowds are gathered together in patient expectation of some sight, are we not struck with the dull look of the people? Does not all life and fun seem crushed out of them by their monotonous toil, and take from life gaiety and happiness,—and surely life is then not worth having. To give harmless pleasures and recreations to the people should be as much the study of the law-giver as to improve their dwellings and to educate them.

The governors of the Zoological Gardens have in the last few years often given tickets to admit whole schools to visit their gardens. They have

in this way given a taste for innocent pleasures to countless numbers of the lower classes, and we may be sure that those who, as children, have had a day's enjoyment in seeing the wild beasts—the monkeys, the seals, the hippopotamus and the elephants, will, as soon as they earn their own living, return to these sights, and bring others with them to enjoy them also. It is often only the ignorance of the poor which keeps them from enjoying that which is quite within their reach, and it is as essential for those who are working for the poor, to show them how they can amuse or enjoy themselves innocently, as to teach them, or to care for them when sick.

Many working men are very fond of fishing, and they will often go out of town for the whole of Sunday with their fishing-rod. Others will spend their day of rest in taking walks into the country, and will go to Primrose Hill, Hampstead, or Richmond.

There is a society at 22, Berners Street, called the Ladies' Sanitary Association, which instituted

many years ago the plan of taking parties of children into the parks. I tried doing this one year, and took as many children into the parks as liked to come with me from the school and the streets where I visited on the Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and I generally had a band of about forty or fifty children with me. We tied red, white, yellow, and blue calico ribands 'round their arms, dividing them like that into smaller bands, which were each put under the care of an older girl. For the eight or ten weeks I took them it answered very well; the children assembled at the school, and we walked through the streets to St. James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park; we also went to Westminster Abbey, the Temple Gardens, and Kensington Gardens.

They brought their little parcels of bread and butter, and sat down to eat it near some of the fountains in the parks. The walk began at four, and they would get home by half-past eight. These parties answered very well as long as I had charge of them; but when I left town and

gave them up to the care of a widow, who had before accompanied us in all our walks, the party dwindled down till there were but half a dozen children, and it had to be given up. I am sure it was of use, and would always be of use, to get the children out of the streets, and teach them the way to the parks. But in this, as in many other things, those who begin the work must carry it on.

How easy it is to give happiness to the poor, and with what trifling expense much can be done! It will often need little besides thought and trouble—but it needs the kind thought, and especially, as I have before said, warm sympathy. There was one, who has now left us, who seemed always devising fresh ways of helping others, not only those around her, but those whom she did not know. Her eager wish to benefit others would make her extend her loving-kindness to the unknown. She said to me one day, "Surely you must know of some hard-worked girl who would be glad of a fortnight's visit to the country

If you know any such, send her down to me." I had no difficulty in finding such visitors, and I sent at three different times girls wearied with the daily toil of long hours and never-ceasing work to spend a fortnight in that small, but beautiful country home. The happiness of Nelly Brown was great at finding herself with the poor widow in Berkshire; but fancy the joy of these girls leaving their hard work, their poor homes, their small share of the one room, to be the welcomed guests of the loving and happy mistress of this pleasant home—servants anxious to join in the welcome the mistress gave—books to read, gardens and woods to wander through at will, companionship as at home, all that was needed to make that fortnight a paradise. There are still the steady, good, hard-worked girls, longing for a breath of country air; but the mistress of that home is gone, and there are not many to be found like her, with the same large heart and wide sympathies, not confined, as I said, to her immediate circle, but extending far beyond to the unknown.

Though I have found no help or sympathy equal to that which I have just referred to, there are many who help unremittingly in other ways. Every week some kind ladies send up for my poor friends a large hamper full of beautiful flowers. The little nosegays are many of them tied together by the tiny fingers of the school children. Sometimes there are bunches of wild-flowers, sometimes flowers from the cottage gardens — old-fashioned sweet-william, sweet-briar, and old man. Then there are bunches of beautiful roses, branches of may, and some more choice nosegays that are put aside for the sick and dying. The hamper comes every Friday in time to give out the flowers for Sunday. So eagerly do the children long for flowers, that when the hamper arrives on the Friday evening they dance round the van singing, "the flowers are come, the flowers are come!" and though they know that I only arrive at eleven in the morning to distribute the flowers, many children are there from eight o'clock waiting for me outside the school,

The sick are first thought of, and then each have their turn, and if some come late, when the flowers are gone, I have seen them pick up the few scattered rose-leaves that may have dropped on the floor. The pleasure of these gifts to the poor none can tell who have not visited them in their own homes, and seen how they will care for them, cutting their stalks and changing the water daily that they may last out the week. Those who walk through the streets inhabited by the poor may see their love of flowers in their window-gardens; some of the poorest houses look bright and gay with their canary flower, geraniums, creeping-jenny, and London pride, and the gift of plants from the parks in autumn is most gratefully received by the poor.

The first impulse given to the flower mission was by Miss Stanley, sister of the Dean of Westminster, who wrote a paper on the subject in *Macmillan's Magazine*, and the response was prompt and hearty. It has now spread widely, and there are flower missions to

hospitals and workhouses all over the kingdom. Every hamper I receive gives me fresh pleasure, knowing the joy they give to so many.

It is also a link between the poor of the country and the poor of London; and it was through these presents of flowers that I was once invited by the kind donors to take three hundred school-children down to some lovely woods in the neighbourhood of London. There we were received by many ladies and gentlemen, each having undertaken to bring dinner for about twelve or more children. We all sat down on the side of a hill, under the shade of fir-woods, and were waited on with every attention. After dinner the children played about, and before we left they all had tea and cake, and a bag of goodies was given to each child.

Amongst the pleasures or recreations we can give to the poor, we may mention the mothers' meetings. These words are a mystery to many; they wonder what enjoyment there can be in a number of mothers, with several babies, coming

to spend a couple of hours together. But that it is a pleasure, none who have been present at a mothers' meeting can doubt. A story is read to them, as they sit and work. I have often had a friend with me who could sing, and troubles and anxieties have been forgotten for a time, as they listened to the songs, the ballads, or the hymns sung to them unweariedly by their friend, comforting the sorrowful and soothing the careworn. The mothers' meeting is also of use as a saving club. They bring their pence, and materials are given to them when they have saved sufficiently to pay for them. Those who think there is but poor entertainment in a mothers' meeting, do not know how utterly devoid of amusement or culture is the life of the generality of the working classes in London.

CHAPTER XI.

MORE WORKERS WANTED.

WILL those who have followed me thus far have seen what has been my object in writing? what excuse I have for adding to that pile of books which are increasing in number every year? My object has been to enlist more workers for the poor, more, who with an enlightened spirit, and with warm sympathy, will seek to improve the conditions of working people, not in a sentimental fashion, but with common sense, and with loving hearts that will feel the sorrows that, alas! we are often unable to heal.

But we can do much, and let none despair and say that their help would be of no use,

that their efforts would be too feeble to stem the great tide of misery. From the poor, I have said, we can often learn, and a story I heard a few years ago, of a poor labourer, may encourage some who have but small scope for their energies.

This poor man lived in a cottage, in a far-away neglected part of a large parish. He cared for his religion above all things, and he thought if there was a church in that apparently God-forsaken spot, the people would be less wild and less wicked. So day by day, as he toiled back from his weary work; he would beg a brick here, or a large stone there, and carry them home with him; till at last he had a great heap of bricks and stones near his cottage; and with a real faith that could remove mountains, he used to say to his neighbours that these bricks and stones would build a church. He grew old and the heap grew ever bigger, and at last, when three-score and ten years had gone over his head, he died, and his last words were that the bricks

and stones he had collected were to be used for building a church to the glory of God. And truly his stedfast faith was not misplaced. His fervent hopes were realised, not indeed, during his lifetime. But on hearing of the old man's pious and life-long work, a great landowner undertook to finish what the poor man had begun, and the church was built, the foundations being made of those very bricks and stones.

These materials were collected slowly, one by one, and in like manner our efforts may appear small and insignificant: they may at times seem to us worthless, but it is not so. Every visit we pay, every lesson we teach, helps towards alleviating the great load of sorrow, of ignorance, and of poverty, which seems to be crushing out the happiness from the lives of the poor. The district visitor, the Sunday-school teacher, the almoner, the manager of the coffee taverns, of the penny bank and the workmen's club, will all be storing up bricks, which may some day build

up the happiness and the prosperity of the working classes.

Many evils can only be rectified by legislation. But legislation must be brought about by individual efforts and individual experience. These will point out where the evil exists that needs remedy, and therefore the humblest worker may be helping the most powerful legislator, and the uneducated but earnest man may be helping the philosopher who, with his profound intellect, is trying to work out the best way of improving humanity.

There are four great obstacles to the improvement of the working classes—want of Education, Over-crowding, Improvidence, and Drunkenness. The first of these obstacles we may consider as overcome, inasmuch as the School Board will henceforward reach the poorest and the lowest in our country. The School Board has now ample power to compel the children to come and learn. Their schools are not better in themselves, though they are as good, as the best denominational schools

that were already in existence; but they have the great advantage of compulsory powers, which was the chief drawback to the thorough efficiency of the old schools.

As for the Over-crowding, that also we may hope in time to see remedied, by the operation of the Artisans' Dwelling Act, and by the various companies now formed for the purpose of building workmen's dwellings. The Improvidence of the poor will be remedied in future, it may be hoped, by their improved education, and by the facilities which are now given to them for saving.

The National Penny Bank gives advantages for saving that the Post-office Bank never possessed. In the Post-office no sum could be entered under a shilling, nor could any broken sum be put by; and above all, the Post-office is closed after six o'clock, whereas the National Penny Bank is open every evening from half-past six till nine o'clock. The first of these Banks was opened in October, 1875; there are now twelve branches in different parts of London

open every evening, and from each of these are numerous smaller branches, in connection with schools or workshops. The total amount of money deposited up to this time, two-and-a-half years, is 115,654*l.* 8*s.*; of this 67,341*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.* has been withdrawn at different times, and the balance left in is 48,312*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.* The branch which has been opened in the parish where I visit began its work on the 1st of January, 1876. There have been, since that time, 5,511 accounts opened; 3,459 of these have been closed, but over 2,000 accounts remain open. Those that are closed represent in many cases small sums saved up by children and grown-up people for use at the Bank holidays. Even if the money is all withdrawn, the fact of having saved is an education in itself, and few close an account without the intention of opening another.

But the greatest obstacle to the improvement of the labouring classes, and the source of most of the misery and crime, is the drunkenness which is so prevalent amongst them,—and how is this to be cured? Many means have been

tried, many plans adopted, and each person will, no doubt, think that their own plan is the one sure remedy. A Select Committee of the House of Lords is now sitting to inquire into the causes of, and the cure for, intemperance. May their labours be blessed with success, and in the meantime let all other available means be tried.

Coffee palaces, coffee taverns, workmen's clubs, reading rooms, free libraries, bands of hope, church temperance societies, all will help and pave the way for a change in public feeling with regard to drinking. As in the higher classes the drinking is no longer what it was in the last century, because public opinion is against it; so in time the same feeling may prevail amongst the lower classes.

A coffee tavern has lately been opened in the Seven Dials, and it vies with its neighbour the gin-palace. Its profits cannot be as large, but its prospects are most flourishing. In the lower and upper rooms, working men come in for breakfast and dinner; they may

bring their own food, and have it cooked at the charge of one halfpenny,—the cup of cocoa, coffee, or tea costing a penny, a plate of beef or ham will be twopence, and two slices of bread and butter one penny, so that the dinner may be had for fourpence. The coffee is well made and of good quality, such as anyone would like to drink. Everything is clean and attractive, the men may smoke, and in the evening they may play at games, and read the papers. The success of the undertaking may be tested by the numbers who frequent the tavern, and they amount to 1,500 or 2,000 a day. From many of the carriage factories in the neighbourhood boys are sent every afternoon with cans for coffee and cocoa. As it becomes more widely known, the numbers will increase—but such is the ignorance of many of the poor of what is happening around them, that a man might be living in the next street and not know of the existence of the new coffee tavern. About one in twenty of the customers are women, and for many who go out to work by the day it is a

great boon. This movement will not touch the drunken, but it may save many from becoming so. A tavern of some sort is essential, a necessity for many of the working people; and if they can get coffee they will often not want intoxicating drinks.

To have any appreciable effect these coffee taverns and coffee palaces must be multiplied all over the town, they must be side by side with the gin-palace; and the workman can then choose which he will patronize.

Amongst the working classes in London we can find many happy homes. The father need not be a teetotaler, but he will never take more than is good for him. The length of residence of weekly tenants, as well as the length of time a man has worked for one master, will show the respectable position he holds.

Many working people I know have lived ten and twenty years as weekly tenants, paying their twelve or thirteen pounds a year for one room. One family, I know, have been in the same room forty-four years, and another came

into their room on the death of the mother, which has made an occupancy of the same family of over sixty years. Much is said about the flitting nature of the London working classes; in some trades, such as building trades, it may necessarily be so; but where the work is done for the West-end shops, for tailors and shoemakers, there is no need of change, and the poor man will care as much as the rich for keeping his one room and staying in his own street. One of the happiest families I know are the Johns; the father is a boot-closer; he has worked for one master many years; he is always steady, and so the money he brings home is enough to keep the family comfortably. Two boys work at the same trade, the eldest daughter is a lace-cleaner earning her fifteen or eighteen shillings a week, and helps to make the home bright and cheerful. To have more accommodation, a brother of Mr. John lodges with them; so that they have three good rooms. Their sitting-room, where they all have their meals comfortably together, is gay with pictures hung

upon the walls,—looking-glass, curtains, clock, sofa, books, all give a feeling of comfort and refinement. They are church-people from conviction and choice, and it was John who began with me the school I have for boys in these parts.

Another home, where the father is a dressing-case maker, and has worked for twenty years for the same master, is as happy a one as the last-mentioned. The Peters have many children; they have not as large rooms as the Johns, so they cannot live in the same comfort; but all are bright and cheerful, three girls working at different trades, all bringing home good weekly earnings, and happy to continue together under the protection and guidance of their parents. A boy is at home, so gifted with a beautiful voice that he gets in consequence of being a choir boy enough money to make him free of expense to his father. Many people say that trades are bad employments for girls, that they should go to service, and not have the evenings at their own disposal; but I am not of this opinion, for where there is a good home, a

careful, loving mother, where can daughters be better than with her? Service is best when the home is a bad or indifferent one, but not otherwise; and though the saying is "that a woman's having a good trade makes an idle husband," still the time may come in the woman's life when the husband dies, or maybe leave her, and then, if she has children to bring up, the knowledge of a trade is a fortune in her hands.

At the night schools for girls or the present sewing class I have, I can show a number of girls all living respectably at home and working at different trades, bringing home sufficient earnings to keep themselves comfortably and well, and also putting by in the Penny Bank; and remember that these girls I am speaking of live in a neighbourhood surrounded by temptations, but are kept above them by their own good principles and home influence.

I have spoken here of but two homes as essentially happy ones, but there are many others I know where the brightness and cheerfulness of the wife, the steady and intelligent

work of the husband, the well brought up children, make a London working man's home, though it may consist but of one or two rooms, as happy a one as any in England. The homes I have mentioned in other parts of these pages have been such; as for instance the Churches, the Welshs and the Cairns; those words of the young soldier's mother will show that love and unity exists in that family as well as refinement and religion.

I have said how much the flowers add to the brightness of the streets of London; there is another movement lately made, that of erecting drinking fountains, which has greatly contributed to the comfort of the poorer classes. They are a great boon. You will seldom pass one of these fountains without seeing some one, man or child, drinking from them. Would that we could have more of these as well as more coffee taverns; but Vestries and Boards of Works often oppose their erection in places where they are most wanted.

In the market I have spoken of it was

intended three years ago to place one in connection with the Drinking Fountain Association; a design was generously made by one who knew the wants of the poor, the money was ready; but the Board of Works would not consent, though nowhere could it be more wanted; as for long summer days do the costermongers stand by their barrows in this market, and could they but get a drink of water at the fountain they would not need to turn in so often to the public-house. So precious is the water there, that you may see a barefooted child carrying back to its mother the black kettle full of fresh water, and it will be waylaid by many another child to have a drink from the spout in passing.

In the summer, when the streets are watered, we are disgusted by the smell of carbolic acid which is put into the watering-carts; but if this is needed, how much besides must be needed to make these poor homes pleasant and refreshing.

But in every way now the poor are being thought of, whether in sanitary matters, educa-

tion, hours of labour, or house accommodation. Many schemes, many undertakings, may be good for one time but not for another; they may have accomplished the work they had to do, they may have been a stepping-stone to something better. For instance, the Ragged Schools were invaluable, they did a great work which but for them would never have been done; now the School Board undertakes the poorest, the most ragged, who, if really unable to pay, are paid for, so the work of the ragged schools is no more needed. In the same way the Refuges have drawn attention to the want that existed, and now the Casual Wards of the workhouses do that work efficiently. Attention has been drawn to the long hours of work; they have been shortened, the Saturday half-holiday is established, and young children are no longer allowed to work.

There is one of our time who has been the foremost in all these works, whether as a philanthropist or as a legislator. To Lord Shaftesbury we mainly owe the Ragged Schools,

the Ragged School Shoeblack Society, and many other institutions; but above all do we owe to him Factory Acts, Acts for improving the dwellings, the well-being of the labouring classes in various ways; the work to which he has devoted his whole life—half a century spent in searching out and remedying the distress which is around us, but often unnoticed. Not satisfied has he been to legislate upon the evidence of others, but he has himself visited the over-crowded parts of the town, the fever-stricken garret, or the damp and death-like kitchens.

Those who have heard him spoken of, as I have done, by the market-women of Covent Garden, will know how his work is gratefully acknowledged and valued by the poor in whose service he spends himself.

One very important work of this generation is the Working Men's College, founded in 1854 by the Rev. F. D. Maurice. It has done much in turning the intellectual activity of working people into a healthy channel. Books are

now easy of access to most of them; but they often need education and teaching to understand the books they possess. Here they can attend classes where they are taught history, philosophy, language, literature, art, and physical science. Mr. Maurice, who established this College, had the keenest and the most enthusiastic sympathy for the wants of working people, both temporal, spiritual, and intellectual. The object of the College is best set forth in the words at the heading of the time-table of the classes held there :—

"The students are, for the most part, working men, and the teachers are in general members of the Universities and of the different professions, or those who have themselves been students in the College. Its purpose is to unite these classes together by associating them in the common work of teaching and learning. It provides instruction at the smallest possible cost (the teaching being almost wholly unpaid) in the subjects with which it most concerns English citizens to be acquainted, and thus

tries to place a liberal education within the reach of working men."

Looking round at all these schemes for improvement, these institutions, these homes, and these schools for the poor, does it not seem that much is being done for the working people? True! Much is being done, and yet much more remains to be done. We, of this century, have been taught by the great Apostle of work, that "all true work is religion; and whatsoever religion is not work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it shall have no harbour. Admirable was that saying of the old monks '*Laborare est Orare*,' work is worship!" This truth has been implanted in the minds of many, thanks to the Teacher who has proclaimed it so loudly that all must hear.

The lives of many will show that they acknowledge this truth: in different ways they may have worked, and many have sought out for themselves new paths by which to benefit others. Take, for instance, the young man who

left luxuries and comforts to live in the East of London, in order to be as one with the people he would help. Or again, another one, Quixotic perhaps, but who to know what the labouring people really felt journeyed from London to Norfolk on foot, resting on the way at any road-side inn, in order to enter into the wants of those he would befriend. Or, again, let me mention the lady who through her earnest preaching against intemperance, caused many public houses to be closed in the country town where she lived.

These may be workers who have taken a foremost place; but there remains for us, who fill the ranks of the army, a real work to accomplish, though an obscure one. And as I said at the outset, he who has the time and the inclination, let him help in the old-fashioned work of district visiting. For this can be done by all, rich or poor, learned or unlearned. As Sarah Martin, the dress-maker in Norfolk, visited the prisons and taught prisoners, so may the working men or women in London give, as

many do, some of their leisure to visiting the sick, and teaching the ignorant.

One of the best helpers I have had in my work was the wife of a shopman. I had tried at several shops, asking if there were any who would help me in the evening at the school. At last, after many refusals, I went into a shop in the centre of the district I was working in. The master of it said, very civilly, to me, that he did not think the help I wanted was at all in the line of any of his shopmen. On which one of them came forward and said, "I should be glad to help, but I am already engaged at the Baptist Chapel. I think though, that Long's wife might help you." And she did help me, most effectively, for the two years she remained in that neighbourhood, both in teaching and in visiting the sick. Another helper I had was a young woman who had to work for her living, but who never tired of working amongst the poor, and whose undaunted spirit enabled her to go amongst people whom many would have feared to meet.

But I would ask those who have time at their command, who have energy, kindness, and good sense, to help if they are not already engaged in some work of this sort. Lawyers, clerks, soldiers, many of them are working in the various ways I have described; but there may be some left who have not yet chosen their work, and to such I would say, do not delay. Is it still true in the nineteenth century that the harvest is ready but the labourers are few?

If after reading these pages any should wish to help in this work about the Five Dials, either in the night-schools or in district visiting, I shall gladly welcome them. There is work for all, men and women, rich or poor. In that case, let them apply to the Vicar of St. Mary's, Crown Street, or through him to me; and should they wish for an introduction from me to any of my poor friends, they may rely on one that will ensure them a hearty welcome, if they come on their part with sympathy and judgment. Spasmodic work is not of much use;

it should be continuous when once undertaken. I have many friends to thank most heartily and gratefully, who have at different times, and in various ways, helped me with efficiency and cordiality, and who, if circumstances had permitted them to give up as much time to the work as I have done, would, I am sure, have accomplished far more.

There is so much sorrow in this life, as well as much happiness; but is it not unequal in its distribution? And cannot all of us who have happiness and comforts as our portion of this world's goods, do something to make the balance more even? Can we not give to those less fortunate some of our time, our culture, and our joy? Some are still too young to visit amongst the poor in London; if so, let them prepare themselves for it, if they wish one day to undertake the work. All will find something to do, if they wish for it, and without labour there can be no rest. Do not in your work seek for any reward, for any return in gratitude or thanks from those you have helped. A

good man used to say that he looked on any benefit he had received as a debt which he could not perhaps repay to his benefactor, but might discharge to some other person. Are there any of us who have not received benefits most abundantly? Let us not then fail to pass them on to others.

THE END.

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